

Daily BLESSING

JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH 1966



Daily Blessing

Volume 8

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Speaking Personally

(21)

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in this year. I am filled with joy and

enthusiasm as I survey the possibilities of the coming day. We can have at least one new miracle every day—the direct intervention of God in the affairs of our life which will bring us blessings beyond our imagining. Expectation is the key. We must expect a miracle if we want it to happen, so that we can give God thanks for it. The more thankful we are in 1966, the more God will do in our lives.

In your hand you hold the new look of DAILY BLESSING which we have planned to meet your devotional needs in a greater way. You will find this quarterly issue to be more compact. Your meditations will be available for three months without interruption. The cover, which so many delight in, is more durable. Your book of meditations will be a more permanent reference for your daily inspiration.

In addition, we feel that the saving in printing costs can be applied to the winning of more souls, which I know is as much on your heart as it is on mine.

Please write and tell me how you like the new DAILY BLESSING.

—ORAL ROBERTS

God's Law of Averages

by Oral Roberts

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In the beginning of this New Year I want to share with you a subject that has been a great strength in my believing. I call it "God's law of averages," and I find this law is very encouraging and effective when I use it.

There are nights in the prayer line in our crusades when it seems everyone will be healed. It makes you tingle all over to see the drama of healing unfold before your very eyes. You are astonished and you praise God, until it seems your heart will burst with gratitude. Next day you meet people who say, "Look at me. Last night I could scarcely move a muscle. Now I feel like running and jumping and praising God." On the other hand, there are nights when it seems only a few receive healing. It is at a time like this that I have to remember that I am put on earth for this one purpose and God may be trying me to see if I am worthy of my call-

ing. I can't afford to be defeated in myself or in God. And when the healing comes more slowly than usual my heart is crying out, "O God, be with me tonight and deliver the people."

Speaking frankly, I do not consider an apparent failure as final, for I have preached the Word of God and sown the seed. It may flower later in that person's life. The important thing is that I keep composed and trust that when I have prayed with all the faith I have, it is then in the hands of God who is too wise to make a mistake, too good to do wrong, too strong to fail.

My belief in God's law of averages has helped me when the going gets rough.

The story is told of the immortal Babe Ruth, that he believed that there was a law of averages working in his favor. As you know, the Babe was the greatest hitter baseball has ever known. He knocked 851 home runs and is known throughout the world as the home-run king. What is not known, however, is that he was also the *strike-out* king. He struck out a total of 1,330 times. Did you know that? This means that he struck out more times than he knocked home runs. Had he quit, just because he failed to knock a home run every time he came to bat, he never would have become a renowned hitter.

I once read how one day in Philadelphia, Lefty Grove had struck the Babe out three times in succession. But Babe Ruth had the same expression on his face when he struck out as he did when he

knocked a home run. When he struck out he would turn to the crowd, doff his cap, make a bow, walk to the dugout, sit down, pull out his handkerchief and mop his brow. He was as composed in striking out as he was in knocking a home run. He did not let his failure get him down. That day, one of the players leaned over and said, "Babe, how in this world can you be so calm when you've just struck out three times?" Babe said, "Well, it's like this. I believe in the law of averages. I've noticed that each time I strike out three times, I'm due two home runs and I was just sitting here thinking how sorry I feel for the pitcher the next time I get up to bat." So when his turn came to bat he pointed where the ball was going and knocked it out of the park. Babe Ruth believed in the law of averages.

I believe that God has a law of averages, too, for those who are doing His work and living a sincere Christ-like life; and I believe that this attitude, this belief that God does have a law of averages has given me balance in many hard and difficult situations.

For example, one night in one of our North Carolina crusades, I was in about the same situation in which Babe Ruth found himself. I was not at bat on a baseball diamond, but I was at bat in the prayer line. One night the crowd was so large that we could scarcely breathe. Many of the curious were there and I had the feeling some were saying, "Come on, preacher. Show us what you can do." I did not feel that I could do anything, but that

the Lord could if we would all cooperate with Him and believe. So I summoned all my courage and determined to send my faith to God. It was difficult to preach, but a ray of sunshine filtered through when over 300 unsaved people came forward to make decisions for Christ. Then as the prayer line started, it seemed that my prayers did not rise much above my head. This was strange, for my first successful crusade was conducted in North Carolina and every succeeding crusade has been large and larger. The North Carolina people have received me like their own son and I love them very dearly. However, in this particular service I was having a hard time. I felt as if the devil were making a fool of me and it seemed I should quit and go home. The people in our prayer lines are often desperate for help and that night, when person after person passed by, not receiving the help they should, it almost broke me up. Then as I was praying, I remembered God's law of averages. If I would be faithful to pray earnestly for each one and not become discouraged, my time would come to knock a home run for the Lord.

Looking down the long line, I saw a mother bring her little boy who was hobbling along on crutches. Faith leaped in my heart and I whispered, "O Lord, this is the one." When they stood before me, I noticed one of the boy's feet was secured by a strap which was looped over his shoulder. His name was Douglas Sutton. I asked to hold him on my knee and with my arm about him, I sent my

faith to God. Suddenly the entire atmosphere changed and became electric with expectation. The audience leaned forward and I heard prayers going up from many. The Spirit of the Lord flooded through me and I knew that the lifeless leg dangling from this boy's hip would be healed and he would be able to run and play like other children. My prayer was not long, but my heart was full of assurance. I said to little Douglas, "Son, what do you feel like doing now?" He said, "Running." I handed him down and they took off the shoulder strap and at his mother's insistence, let his foot touch the floor. The moment it touched the floor, the Spirit of God made the lifeless leg strong. Mrs. Sutton was overcome. I said, "Douglas, do you believe God can make you walk off this ramp?" He said, "Oh, yes, sir." I said, "Mrs. Sutton, what do you say?" She was weeping and nodded her permission. I told her to go to the end of the ramp and if she wanted her boy to walk to tell him to come on. So she said, "Come on, Douglas." He took one step, then another. Then he broke into a run. Then someone picked up his crutches and he put them over his shoulder and ran down the aisles for all the people to see. In one second, that vast audience came to their feet. They forgot the seeming failures. Strong men cried like children and women shouted for joy. This went on for several minutes. Finally, I said, "People, will you be seated; people?" It was like speaking to the ocean. They pulled out handkerchiefs and scarves and began waving them, glorify-

ing God. When I saw they were not going to stop I said, "Help yourselves." One of my evangelistic team later said to me, "Oral, this is the first time I ever saw you lose control of your crowd." I said, "No one could have held those people that night. Their faith and my faith had knocked a home run and it was right that they should rejoice."

And friend, while I've talked to you today about "God's Law of Averages," you may have said in your heart: *Well, how are you going to apply this to the New Year?* Simply in this way. You may have had some failure last year. As a matter of fact, you may have had a series of failures. And it may seem to you today that you might as well quit and resign from whatever you are doing. Let me say to you that God has a law of averages which will work and be very effective in your behalf, if you will remember and use your faith in God.

As I survey this New Year, looking forward to twelve brand-new months, I realize that God is giving you and me a fresh new beginning, that we stand on the threshold, knowing that God has all power, that He can help us step up to bat and knock a home run; not every time. No. For that would not be natural or normal, but He will give us enough home runs, so that His law of averages will give us strength and courage to go on and on, day after day.

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Blessing Prayers for Jan.—Mar.

All prayers in DAILY BLESSING are to be prayed with faith in Jesus' name. The Abundant Life Prayer Group suggests the following guide for daily prayer:

8:00 AM **For Spiritual Progress**

Our Heavenly Father, I dedicate myself anew to You and to the working of Your Holy Spirit within me. Make me what I ought to be as a follower of Jesus Christ.

10:00 AM **For Others**

Help all those who are in grief or poverty or have special problems today, Lord. Especially do I name to You now those near and dear to me, that Your abundant grace will meet their every need.

12:00 Noon **For Healing**

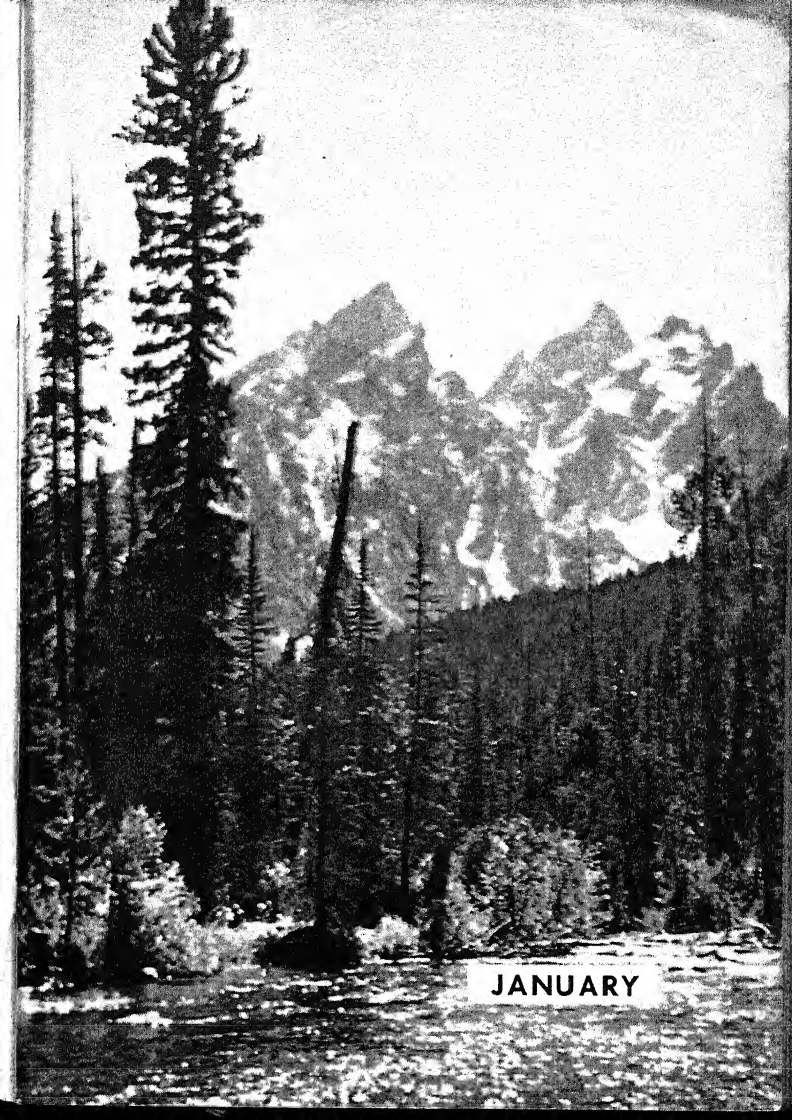
Thank You for the health of spirit, soul and body which You give to those who trust You, Lord. For those who are sick I pray for the complete return to that health and strength which is Your perfect will for Your children.

6:00 PM **For Prosperity**

My heart accepts with joy and praise Your promise that the desires of my heart shall be given me, dear Father. Prosper everything in my life which is in Your perfect will for me.

If You Need Prayer

Write, wire or call the Abundant Life Prayer Group. Consecrated Prayer Partners will pray for your requests. Telephone: Area Code 918, LU 3-2191, Tulsa, Oklahoma.



JANUARY

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.—Psalm 23:3

As the traveler drives along the highways of the American Southwest, he frequently sees signs at the side of the road warning him not to stray off the highway. Although each side of the highway may appear to be a wide stretch of level land, the wilderness is actually a place of deceptive rises and depressions, a pathless and dangerous place to travel.

At the opening of a new year, the mysterious, unknown future may seem pathless and forbidding. But the promise of God comes to us with hope and cheer. "I will make a way in the wilderness." God promises to open up a road for us, and a wilderness with a road is no longer a wilderness. A road makes travel easy and exciting. It makes everything accessible and attainable.

God not only has promised to make a way for us but He goes with us in the way. Our responsibility is to be sure that we go with Him. Then we shall have no need to fear. He is the source of all strength, happiness and prosperity. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Going with God into the new year we can be certain that we shall be led in paths of peace and blessing.

Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths.

Sunday, January 2

Miracles

If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.—Mark 9:23

What is a miracle? *A miracle is an event in the external world which is impossible for man himself to perform.* A genuine miracle is not effected through a philosophy, or a theology, or an attitude. Miracles stem from faith in Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion.

Great thinkers of the past have accepted the miracles of Scripture without question. But in our skeptical, sophisticated era, you must search hard to find scholarly writers who will clearly claim the veracity of specific miracles, even in the New Testament. There are those even among the religious who do not regard miracles as essential to the Christian faith. Yet, throughout the centuries, Christianity stood or fell on the ground that miracles were as one with the truths of the Christian faith.

There are today, as there have been in the past, sources of energy unknown to science which are adequate to explain the cause of events called miracles: GOD. He is the great cause.

God gives a supply for our needs in many different ways, both natural and supernatural. When the natural suffices, that is what God gives us. If the natural is insufficient, we may turn to the all-sufficiency of God, called *miracles*.

Lord, strengthen my faith in the miraculous.

Crises

Monday, January 3



I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.—Psalm 40:8

People traveling through the Panama Canal find that their ship is being lifted by stages. First the ship moves into a lock. The huge gates close and water boils up from beneath. In seven minutes the ship lifts thirty-five feet. The gates open and the ship sails on to another lock, and the process is repeated until finally it glides out on the highest level. The ship travels through the canal on a series of crises.

Spiritual progress is very similar. There is first of all the moment of decision whether or not to go God's way. We accept His way and experience the bubbling of deep joy within our soul. But that does not end the matter. Other spiritual crises come. God's Spirit reveals more and more of the wonders of spiritual experience. We move on and out into more abundant blessing, the gates opening to us as we surrender to His will.

Always there is a decision and a surrender, until God opens the windows of heaven and pours us out such a blessing there is no room to receive it. And yet our capacity for God increases so that we do receive more and more as we go on with Him.

Dear Lord, help me to continue to follow on in Your will which lifts me higher each day.

Tuesday, January 4

Inner Power

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.—Acts 1:8

Power characterizes the ministry of Christ and Christianity. Christianity is more than a course in right thinking or emphasizing peripheral truths or giving up certain habits or even going to some particular place to worship. Christianity is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. And knowing Him is the way, the truth and the life.

Power to be a witness of Jesus Christ is the chief purpose of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Jesus stated that this power of enablement is to be used in relation to Himself: *Ye shall be witnesses unto me.*

The Holy Spirit testifies not of Himself but of Jesus. He is like a painter who paints a picture of a living person. The Holy Spirit sketches Christ and brings Him to life before our eyes so that we can see Him as a present reality. Thus we become Christ-conscious. In being Christ-conscious, we become people-conscious and we want to share Him with others. God baptizes us with the Holy Spirit not for the sake of the blessing alone but that we might be a blessing to others. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not an end, but a beginning.

Fill me with this inner power that I might bring the reality of Christ to others, O Lord.

Protection

Wednesday, January 5

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.—2 Timothy 1:7

Our bodies are “wondrously made,” said the Psalmist. The body has a power of its own to throw off disease and keep itself healthy. As long as nature has not been weakened beyond its power to resist disease, our bodies will ordinarily recover from disease through natural means. But when worry and fear grip the spirit, and the mind is tormented with doubt, then nature is unable to function.

The troubles and cares of this life have a way of wrapping themselves around us and choking off the flow of life-giving power. When we cannot successfully meet life’s problems, we are often frustrated and then we develop an attitude of constant fear—fear of life itself, fear of an early death, fear of not being able to earn a living, fear of being bedridden and helpless, fear of pain and suffering.

The miracle of healing starts from within. Our greatest protection from sickness is to live a life that is free of tensions, fears and frustrations by putting our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. God wants us to get out of ourselves and live a life of faith and victory by casting all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us.

Lord, help me to harmonize my life with Your will that I may be well in body, mind and soul.

Thursday, January 6

There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.—2 Corinthians 12:7

When God says no to our prayers, He has a better way. God's refusal is subject to the change we make in ourselves to conform to His will or what is ultimately best for us.

This was true in the case of Paul's thorn in the flesh. Paul's thorn was an evil power that brought continuous physical buffetings to discourage and hinder him: weaknesses, persecutions, straits, shipwrecks, betrayal of friendships and a long list of other opposing powers. Paul could not understand this, and he sought God three times to remove the thorn. God said, "No, Paul, I shall not take away this thorn, but I will give you a better way. I will make My strength perfect in your weakness. I will give you sufficient grace."

What did this mean? It meant that this hindrance would serve to keep Paul humble, to make him realize that in his weakness he would have to depend wholly upon God and His strength, knowledge and power.

Paul went forth by the power of God and preached more sermons, won more converts, established more churches, wrote more books of the Bible and did more for God than any other man of his day. God said no, for the simple reason that He had a better way.

Lord, may I wholly yield to Your will.

Expect

Friday, January 7

What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.
—Mark 11:24

Expectancy creates the mood for deliverance. It gets us in the right frame of mind and sets the stage for God to answer prayer. It influences Heaven and starts things happening.

Many years ago I prayed for a little retarded child. The next morning the mother came to where we were staying and said, "Oh, Brother Roberts, my child is going to be all right." I asked her how she knew. She said, "This morning, for the first time, she became conscious of her surroundings and is getting more alert every minute."

I remembered something about her attitude when she came before me to receive prayer for her child. Her whole attitude spoke to me, *I expect a miracle.*

In the same way, men and women without a job, who have looked everywhere and have found nothing but closed doors, have suddenly witnessed a change. Things began to happen for them when they acquired an attitude of expectancy. The change happened inside them first before it became a reality.

If we believe without expecting, God could send the answer, but because we were not expecting it, we would not recognize it.

Father, after I pray, let my soul look up to You with expectant, believing faith.

Saturday, January 8

My

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.—
Psalm 23:1

The Psalmist David based his relationship with God on a personal experience with the Lord. Note the words "my shepherd." There among the hills of old Judaea, he walked and talked with God as closely as he did with his sheep. Shepherds are very close to their sheep, and the sheep to their shepherd. David knew his sheep and called each of them by name. They knew his voice and responded to him. The flock willingly followed him.

I believe in a "personal experience" religion—one where Christ lives in your heart, where He knows you and you know Him, where you walk hand in hand together in personal companionship and where you speak to one another with familiarity and understanding.

A great scientist at one of our universities said some time ago, "I am a Christian by the laboratory method of experimentation. Christianity does not stand on the shifting sands of hypothesis, but on the rock of two-thousand years of Christian experience." He said that Newton had his dynamics of matter in motion. Einstein had his dynamics of relativity. And Christ had His dynamics of the Spirit. "I am a Christian by experimentation," the scientist said. *I have experienced Christ!*

Lord, I thank and praise You for the glorious experience of salvation I have in You.

Say

Sunday, January 9



He shall have whatsoever he saith.—Mark 11:23

Here is probably the most powerful promise of answered prayer that can be found in all the Word of God.

It deals with prayer as an affirmation.

Jesus said, "Truly, I tell you, whoever *says* to this mountain, Be lifted up and thrown into the sea! and does not doubt at all in his heart, but believes that what he *says* will take place, it will be done for him." (Amplified Version.)

First, we have an objective. Choose the "mountain" (problem) that you want removed—a peak at a time. In other words, be specific when you pray.

Second, speak to the "mountain." The mountain may be a sickness, a financial condition, a state of *impasse* in your work for God, a spiritual problem. Whatever it is, affirm your faith in God and in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, by saying, "Be lifted up and thrown into the sea!"

Third, do not doubt. Block every effort of doubt to enter your heart. Absolutely refuse to tolerate its presence. Believe—actively, positively believe—that your mountain is going.

The results are unquestionable. You shall have whatsoever you *say*! The word of faith is in your mouth.

Father, I accept Your promises. I will allow no doubt to cloud my faith.

Monday, January 10

Viewpoint

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are . . . my thoughts than your thoughts.—Isaiah 55:9

Eight-year-old Mary made a wry face. "Ugh! Look at that robin eating a big, ugly worm. Isn't it awful?" she said to her brother Bob, two years her senior. "I'm not so sure," said Bob. "I guess if we were hungry robins, and God gave us this kind of food, we would be very happy for it." Bob had wisdom beyond his years. He was seeing things from God's viewpoint.

We can develop the habit of looking at the complexities of our lives through the eyes of God. For instance, His Word says, "All things work together for good" It does not say that everything is good, but that everything *works together* for good. When we are inclined to judge people harshly because we see only those things that displease us, the Bible reminds us: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." When our faith is tried, we are apt to become discouraged. Then it is comforting to read: "The trying of your faith worketh patience."

Faith is born as we see God's viewpoint. We begin to see people as God sees them and love them as He loves them. As our faith lays hold of God's viewpoint, many of life's mysteries become clear.

Dear Lord, help me to see things from Your viewpoint.

Influence

Tuesday, January 11

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—Matthew 5:16

Piled-up masses of snow, high in the Swiss Alps, are said to be so delicately balanced that climbers are cautioned not to speak above a whisper, for a loud noise might reverberate and start an avalanche.

All too often human lives are just as delicately balanced. Few things contribute more to our Christian stability than to know that other souls have been placed providentially within our sphere of influence. We have the awesome privilege of influencing their destiny.

Helen Keller once said to Philips Brooks, "Tell me what you know about God." Whether we realize it or not, this is what the world is saying today, often unconsciously, to Christians: *Tell me what you know about God.* A knowledge of God is man's deepest need. There is a hunger of the soul that surpasses any hunger of the body; a hunger that is never satisfied without God.

The Christian life is a relationship to a Person—Jesus Christ. If presenting Christianity to others is to demonstrate Him, that is done precisely to the degree that we know Him. And we can know Him only as we spend time with Him.

Help me to live a life that influences others for You, O Lord.

Wednesday, January 12

Direction

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.—Hebrews 12:2

"I'm not interested in religion," said a woman to Evelyn Roberts.

"Why is it that you feel that way?" asked Mrs. Roberts.

"Oh, I have attended church regularly with my family for many years, but no more! Recently I was in the hospital and felt I needed someone to pray for me. I sent for my minister. He arrived at the same time as my doctor, and he left with the doctor. Since he did not feel he could stay and minister to me, I have lost faith in him. I do not go to church anymore."

The writer to the Hebrews gives us some clear directions for running the Christian race. They include: "laying aside" many things, "running patiently," and "looking unto Jesus." People disappoint and disillusion us. Temporal things are subject to change and decay. But Jesus never fails. If we have a fresh, warm experience of salvation in our hearts . . . if we know Jesus as a real person, we can look beyond the failures of people and repose our trust in Him. He is always present to minister to us anytime we need Him. How necessary it is to keep our eyes upon Him!

Lord, make me patient and tender with all I meet today and help me to keep my eyes upon You.

Refreshing

Thursday, January 13

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.—John 15:11

Teenagers sometimes have a painfully unsophisticated way of expressing themselves, but which is also delightful and refreshing. Upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ into her heart, one 16 year old expressed her great happiness in the Lord this way: "I always thought religion was just for 'older folks.' You know—those around 22 or 23 years old. But what I have found is wonderful. I never knew such joy. It's good for everyone!"

Where is joy found? Not in unbelief, for Voltaire, the infidel, wrote, "I wish I had never been born." Not in pleasure, for Lord Byron, who revelled in a life of pleasure, wrote, "My days are in the yellow leaf. The flowers and fruits of life are gone. The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone."

The Psalmist knew where true joy was. He said, "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). Those who seek joy apart from Jesus Christ go from one excitement to another only to find it is temporary. The imitation causes them to hunger over and over again. Christ's joy fully satisfies. Jesus makes it plain that if His joy remains in us, our joy will be full.

Fill me with Your joy, O Lord, I pray.

Friday, January 14

Bequest

We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all.—Hebrews 10:10

An elderly lady in a midwestern city felt that she could no longer pay any bills that were not absolutely necessary. She went to her insurance company and explained that she was unable to make additional payments on a policy she held.

"It would be unwise to stop payments now," said the company official, "this is a very valuable policy. I would like to see your husband about it."

"My husband has been dead three years," she said.

Immediately the official went into action. The woman received in refund three years overpaid premiums plus the full amount for which her husband had insured his life in her favor. The money was sufficient to keep her in comfort for the rest of her life.

The last will and testament of Christ ensures eternal riches for everyone who believes in Him. This bequest of eternal salvation is ours through His death for us on the cross. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," He said. Are we taking advantage of that which is ours through faith? Life can become entirely new when we begin to draw on the resources which come to us as a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Dear Lord, may I live in the full enjoyment of my eternal salvation.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.—Philippians 3:8

Before the city of Johannesburg in South Africa was founded, a Dutch farmer homesteaded in the area. An Englishman became interested in the farm and the owner offered to sell it for twelve oxen. The prospective buyer offered eight and they failed to agree on a price. The Englishman went his way and the Dutchman stayed on the farm. Neither of the men ever knew that beneath their feet was the world's richest reef of gold-bearing ore.

The Englishman saw only a crude wilderness farm, not worth twelve oxen. Even the Dutchman did not realize the treasure he had. Sometimes when the Christian way gets rough and we have to shoulder a cross for Christ's sake, we may wonder if the price is too high. Satan tries to tell us how much easier it would be if we went along with the crowd.

We do God an injustice and cheat ourselves too, if we have no vision beyond the present. The Apostle Paul who suffered for Christ more than we ever shall, found that the present was lit up by the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" that awaits those who serve Christ wholeheartedly.

Whatever it costs, the joy of serving Christ is worth it all—and infinitely more.

Lord, give me vision to see beyond the present.

Sunday, January 16

Require

Let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.—2 Corinthians 9:7

A letter from the Oriental Mission Society tells of a group of Christians in Kwangju, Korea, who were meeting in a shell-like structure, a small church in the making. It was without floor, windows or doors. Sub-zero weather was approaching, so these believers decided something must be done to complete their church. All their available money and materials had been given. But love found a way!

They decided to give "a part of themselves." The women were selling their long braids of hair to wigmakers, and the men were selling their blood to a blood bank, pint by pint. Someone might say, "Oh, but God doesn't require such sacrificial giving from us." No, maybe He doesn't *require* it, but He is certainly moved and greatly pleased with such acts of love.

Mary of Bethany, who anointed Jesus' feet with the precious alabaster box of spikenard, did not do it because He *required* it of her. Rather, her love for Him *required* that she do it. Her deed portrayed the utter outpouring of her devotion for the Nazarene and how much she loved Him. Giving unto the Lord is loving Him and is the highest form of worship. The return of such giving is happiness that is full and running over.

O Jesus, teach me to give You my best.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.—Psalm 32:8

A certain building in downtown Chicago can change a raindrop's course by hundreds of miles. If the raindrop falls on the east side of the building, it will flow into Lake Michigan. If it falls on the west side, it drains into a sewer and eventually goes into the Mississippi River. Thus a wisp of wind can change the destiny of a raindrop.

There comes a point in everyone's life when they are brought to a moment of choice . . . whether to follow Christ or to go in the path of their own desires. The choice has far-reaching implications. It determines the whole course of life. Christ is the dividing line between good and evil. Failure and success in life are not far apart, but they are in opposite directions.

Life's true success is found in Christ. Sometimes our goal seems far away, but when we look to Christ we foil Satan's attempts to discourage us. The distance we have gone is not nearly as important as the direction we are headed. When we are on the side of Christ, working and living for Him, we are moving toward love, peace, abundance and joy. With Him at our side, we cannot fail to reach our proper destination and our heavenly home.

I take my stand for You, O Christ. Guide me in the way You want me to go.

Tuesday, January 18

Content



Godliness with contentment is great gain.—1 Timothy 6:6

A man walking by the home of a colored saint heard her singing cheerfully. He paused and saw that she was doing her laundry on an old washboard. "Aunt Mary," he called, "you seem to be happy at your work this morning." The woman wiped the suds from her hands. "Yes, Sir," she said, "I am happy. You see, I've got the spirit of washin' this mornin'."

She had learned a secret of contentment. When she had washing to do, she had the "spirit of washing."

Christians do the most ordinary tasks with zest when they take each day's work as from the hand of their Heavenly Father. This attitude of joy and enthusiasm makes our lives more contented and draws others to the Master.

Even when Paul was in prison for the gospel, chains did not bind his spirit. "I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ," he declared. How could a man with that attitude be hurt? Whatever our work is today—whether difficult or simple, exciting or mundane—we can expect Jesus to be there with us. His presence will brighten each moment. We shall enjoy our labor more, and our lives will tell for Him.

Lord Jesus, may I work with joy so that my life will be a witness to others.

Example

Wednesday, January 19

Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.
—1 Timothy 4:12

The beloved poet, Edgar Guest, wrote, "It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home." It can also be said, "It takes a heap o' lovin' to make a house a home." With love, a hut can be paradise for two. Without love, a mansion can be merely the stage for a drama of hatred and jealousy.

A Christian university student said, "I am almost afraid to get married; one sees so few people really happily married."

Far too many homes are sorely lacking in deep, abiding love and understanding. Someone said, "It is easier for us to commit our children to God than to be always an example in speech . . . easier to 'lay down the law' than to be an example in love—the love which is ever ready to believe the best, which never fails, is never jealous, is never unmanly, never insists on its own rights, is never touchy or fretful."

Paul said that we are epistles "known and read of all men." The best way to learn love is to be taught it by example. The way our children and the outside world will be convinced of the reality of Christ is by seeing living examples of what He can do for them.

Fill my home with Your love, dear Jesus.

Thursday, January 20

Two Kinds

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.—2 Timothy 1:12

John Bunyan once said that he had two kinds of money. The money in the bank, he explained, was of a rather permanent nature, while the money in his pocket was always changing. That is the way it was with him spiritually. His moods and feelings were like the loose coins in his pocket—*always changing*. But his capital was safely lodged in the strong-keeping of Christ.

When we are in good health and the flame of life is strong within us, our soul sings. But our moods and feelings can and do change with circumstances. Faith does not go by feelings, which are at times unreliable. The wise man does not allow feelings to sway his faith, for they are his servants not his masters. Rather, he allows his mind to dwell on his standing in Christ.

Our feelings are like the loose change in our pocket. When Christ is our banker He will keep safely that which we commit unto Him. Any transaction with God is real when faith acts, whether every feeling coincides or not. It may not seem as real to us, but in God's sight it is a binding agreement. This is a great secret of victory.

O God, deliver me from the influence of changing moods and feelings.

Rise Up

Friday, January 21

A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.—Proverbs 24:16

There is a poem by an unknown author entitled "Don't Give Up." It goes like this:

*Twixt failure and success the point's so fine
Men sometimes know not when they touch the line,
Just when the pearl was waiting one more plunge,
How many a struggler has thrown up the sponge!
Then take this honey from the bitterest cup:
"There is no failure save in giving up!"*

Failures, setbacks and rebuffs are no reason for quitting or giving up our goal. Success in any area of life is reached only after we have learned to avoid certain things and to regard others. Research in scientific laboratories proceeds from failure to failure, but always with the goal of success in sight. Each failure is a steppingstone to final success. When we fall, the important thing is to rise up quickly and go on. Victory is closer now than it was before we stumbled.

The Apostle Paul refused to let his thoughts dwell on his past—the years wasted in sin. He said, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind . . . I press toward the mark for the prize." God wants us to have victory. It is ours when we keep on trying, trusting and believing in Him.

Father, help me not to despair. Inspire me by the goal to press on.

Saturday, January 22



Holy

God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.—Exodus 3:4

Joseph Henry, great American scientist of the last century, was a professor of natural philosophy at the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. While preparing an elaborate experiment before his class he would say, "Gentlemen, we are about to ask God a question." Then the experiment would proceed, the answer to which was just as real and reverent to him as any received in church or at a place of prayer.

When God appeared to Moses it was in the desert, in the place where he kept sheep. It was a common bush that blazed with fire. And God said to Moses, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Wherever we find ourselves today, in the home, office, store, school, the golf course, the place where we are, at each precise moment, is holy ground. We do not have to make a five-minute prayer to realize the presence of God. He is where we are and deep down inside us there can be an altar where we commune with Him.

Without this understanding between us and God, we will be bored and frustrated, living on a level God never intended for us. In our lives every common bush can burn with holy fire.

O God, help me to realize Your presence in the commonplace things of life.

Sunday, January 23

What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—Matthew 16:26

In Tennyson's stories of the Knights of the Round Table, the dying King Arthur asked Sir Bedivere to throw his jewelled sword Excalibur into the lake. Sir Bedivere wanted to keep the valuable sword and hid it in the reeds, twice. But the dying king knew, and insisted that he throw it in the lake. As he finally obeyed, an arm arose and caught the sword, brandished it three times and drew it under. The brandished sword is the symbol of triumph. Sir Bedivere conquered when he surrendered.

There was a young man in Christ's day who did not surrender. Jesus said to the rich young ruler, "Go and sell that thou hast . . . and come and follow me." He reconsidered his desire to follow Jesus, and went away sorrowful. He could have been a great apostle, but instead we read of a nameless young man who loved his possessions too much.

When Christ calls us, He wants all of us. His love for us will admit no rivals. Self-surrender, on the surface, may seem loss and defeat. But Jesus said, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." We only find our true selves in surrender to Christ. It is the way to personal and eternal triumph.

Dear Lord, help me to know the joy of full surrender.

Monday, January 24

Praise

The Lord hath anointed me . . . to give unto them . . . the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—Isaiah 61:1, 3

God gave Moses specific instructions as to the garments the priests of the Old Testament were to wear. When the priest entered into the presence of God to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, he wore the specified holy garments.

God anointed Jesus so that in coming into our lives He might provide for us a garment of praise. The Lord desires that we enter into His presence wearing it. Praise lifts the spirit. Many times we come to the place of prayer with heavy hearts, our minds full of our desperate needs. But when we begin to praise the Lord, the heaviness lifts and the garment of praise slips over our shoulders.

To be fitted for a garment, we must sometimes raise our arms to try it on. It is much the same in the spiritual realm. When we raise our arms and sincerely praise God, we find we are soon worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

We have a great opportunity today to enter into our worship with praise and adoration to God for all the wonderful things He has done for us. The spirit of heaviness that weights us down will automatically drop off, because in God's presence there is fullness of joy.

I praise You, dear Lord, for the joy I find in serving You.

Called . . . out of darkness into his marvellous light.—1 Peter 2:9

Through years of hard work and intense study a certain man had achieved a position of responsibility. But this morning he felt that everything he had worked for had turned to gall. He was only 30 and the doctor had told him he had six months to live. During the long, dark, pain-racked nights he cursed his fate. Bitterness engulfed him. "Why did God let this happen? Why? Why?"

Then suddenly his resentment abated. *God? What thought had he given to God all these years?* He began some heart-searching and realized that he had allowed his spiritual darkness to grow while he accepted false gods of material things. He had given only lip service to belief in God.

There in his hospital cot, he began to pray like a little child. "Suffer me to come to Thee." A warm feeling of acceptance with God enveloped him. His health began to improve and he came up out of the valley of death.

Jesus said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." We may bring darkness upon ourselves by our wrong believing, but when we turn to Jesus and renew our faith, the light will flood our pathway. He is the light of life.

Help me, O Lord, to keep close to You, that every dark place may be made light.

Wednesday, January 26

Lay Hold



Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things.—Jeremiah 33:3

Hudson Taylor tells of a young man who had been called to the foreign field. He had not been in the habit of preaching, but he knew how to prevail with God. Going to a friend one day, he remarked, "I don't see how God could use me on the field. I have no special talent." "Brother," his friend said, "God wants men who can pray. There are many preachers but few pray-ers."

In his room in the early dawn and throughout the day the young missionary's voice could be heard weeping and pleading with God for souls. To this man's house, hungry souls would come, drawn by some irresistible power. They would say: "I have gone by your house many times and have longed to come in. Will you tell me how I can be saved?"

The mystery was unlocked. In the secret chamber the young missionary pled for souls and claimed them. The Holy Ghost knew just where these souls were and sent them along. If we would all thus lay hold on God, with the holy violence and unconquerable perseverance of faith-filled prayer, a good many things would give way against which we have been beating in vain with our puny human wisdom.

Dear Jesus, lay lost souls upon my heart. Help me to win them through prevailing prayer.

Alchemy

Thursday, January 27

Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.—Genesis 50:20

Do you believe in the “conversion” of circumstances? Do you believe that God can take the brass of the most adverse condition and by a divine alchemy change it into a golden blessing? The Bible and experience prove that He can and He does.

No more cruel thing could have been done to another than was done to Joseph by his brethren, when they sold him as a slave. But God *converted* Joseph’s slavery to a place of highest honor, and changed his state of bondage to one of power. When years had passed and Joseph saw his brethren begging for the bread that only he, as a ruler over all the land of Egypt, could provide, how could he feel anything other than gratitude to an all-wise God, who saw the end from the beginning and provided for the salvation of his brethren?

It is unnecessary for a child of God to harbor bitter resentment against another because of some real or fancied wrong committed against them. If we appear to have enemies that work against us, we can thank God for them, for whatever they try to do against us, God will make it work out for our ultimate good. We can safely leave our cause in His hands.

Lord, I believe You will turn all the circumstances of my life to good.

We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.
—Ephesians 1:7

A lady who owned a dress shop in London, England owed a great deal of money to a creditor. The man took the case to court and a bankruptcy order was about to be issued when suddenly the judge dismissed the case. What had made the difference? The lady who owed the money had married the man who was her creditor. Her husband dropped the claim.

When we accepted Christ as Savior, God dropped the charges of sin against us. Yet, Satan still spends a great deal of his time trying to convince us that the charges still stand. He tries to fill our minds with condemnation for the past, anxieties about our salvation and our future. All doubt, fear and worry and accusations are from him. Jesus said that Satan is a liar. With our trust in Christ we can close our ears to Satan's lies.

Our Heavenly Father loves us, for Christ has made us His own. We are now one with Christ and are accepted with Him. The charges against us have been dismissed. We can lift up our heads and look toward God with confidence and thanksgiving, because our righteousness and our salvation are in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank You, Father, for this uttermost salvation.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.—Psalm 23:6

Rain had been coming down since before dawn. Neighborhood men splashed off, grumbling, to work. Housewives fretted over rain on laundry day. Then down the street came a small figure, a little boy in a bright-yellow raincoat and red boots. His progress was slow, because he stopped often to pick up something from the drenched sidewalk. A woman called to him, "Young man, aren't you getting awfully wet?" He looked up and his smile was radiant.

"Yes, but look what I found!" He opened his hand. "Worms!"

The child with his God-given gift of wonder had found what adults often miss—that every day has its own treasure. For him, the treasure of this cheerless gray day was shining earthworms in the rain.

Most of us lead routine lives with little triumphs and small sorrows. Yet today's victories and disappointments are not the same as yesterday's and tomorrow's will be different again. Are we awake to the joys and opportunities of each new day?

Each day is a rebirth. It is another chance to be glad in the Lord; to enjoy again His miracles of sun and rain and His creation; to show our love for Him by giving of ourselves to others.

Open my eyes to see, and help me to rejoice in the miracles You send to me, Lord.

Sunday, January 30

Capital

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.—Matthew 12:35

Friends of a certain young man who went through a period of serious difficulty and trial were in constant amazement at his poise and calmness in the midst of it all. They were ready to be a help to him, but actually he was a help to them, for every one has his times of difficulty, though they vary in degree. The young man's attitude was a living sermon. He was asked how he managed it.

"I had very little to do with it at the time," he said. "I knew that my help would come from the storehouse within me. Through the years I have built habits, among them is prayer. Early in life I found my way to God often and so I have come to depend constantly on His guidance and strength. When a situation is beyond me, such as the one I recently faced, I know that God will be there to lead me through it."

Financial advisers encourage us to save for the future. We build up savings accounts, stocks and shares against hard times. But we often fail to build up our spiritual capital. The wise Christian knows the value of spiritual assets, and builds habits of prayer and self-discipline. To really know God when all is well prepares us for any emergency.

Father, keep me mindful of the value of spiritual capital.

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray . . . and he shall hear my voice.—Psalm 55:17

Prayer puts us in direct contact with God and we can talk with Him heart to heart. This is one of the most thrilling aspects of our Christian life. God is personally aware of us and hears us when we call upon Him.

Someone once asked, "Does God know me as a person? Does He hear my individual voice?"


The Bible confirms that He does. When Ishmael and his mother were banished from the home of Abraham and Sarah, they wandered in the wilderness. Finally all their water was gone and Hagar thought they both would die. But the angel of the Lord called to her out of Heaven and said, "Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad," and the angel showed her a well of water. (Genesis 21:17.)

God called to young Samuel by name, saying, "Samuel, Samuel." And David the Psalmist said, "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications" (Psalm 116:1). Jesus called His disciples by their names. When He appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, He said, "Saul, Saul." (Acts 9:4.) He spoke to Cornelius, calling him by name. (Acts 10:3.) He knows you and me also, and hears our individual voices when we call unto Him.

As I pray, Jesus, let me be conscious of the personal concern You have for me.

The Grace of Compassion

by Arthur L. Rouleau



A bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick. — 2 Kings 4:10

The outgoing love in the hearts of the Shunammite woman and her husband reminds us of the compassion of our Savior. It is the kind of compassion that always thinks of the comfort and blessing of others.

The Bible story in 2 Kings 4 tells us that she is troubled by the need of a place of refreshment and retreat for the prophet Elisha and his servant. It is evident that there were many other people in homes that the prophet visited on his missionary journeys who enjoyed his message but did not respond to his simple needs.

The Scripture sets the Shunammite apart as a "great woman" not for her religious experience alone, but for her faith expressed by her compassion; a compassion aroused by God's love and coming naturally out of the living faith of her heart. It made her sensitive to the voice of God and moved

her with a desire to do something for His prophet.

Such compassion is never a one-way road. It has its blessings in return. There was the enormous blessing of fellowship with the anointed man of God. How the humble dwelling must have filled with glory as Elisha described to them his experience when he saw Elijah go up in a chariot of fire, his thrill as Elijah's mantle came floating down to him and he smote Jordan's waters and walked across dryshod!

Then there was the blessing bestowed upon her in return for the comforts of the little chamber. Elisha sends his servant to ask her what she would like most, and she seems to be perfectly content with what she has. But God knew the hidden yearning for a son to carry on their name in Israel.

Calling her to him, the prophet promises her that she will have her heart's desire. *A son? she muses, surely the prophet knows she hasn't conceived in younger days. Surely he must have a strange sort of humor to probe the scars on so deep a wound?*

"And the woman conceived and bare a son."

The miracle blessing is stated so simply in God's Word. A lifetime of yearning is satisfied by one touch of the hand of God. God gave her a son when she gave comfort to His servant. A small investment opened a treasurehouse of riches for her.

Whenever we allow the great outgoing love of God to flow from our lives, there will always be a vast store of His extraordinary blessings coming back to us.



FEBRUARY

Guidance

Tuesday, February 1

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.—Psalm 73:24

Everyday we need guidance. When we buy a piece of property, when we deal with our children, when we have a problem to solve in our work or in the home, we ask, "What is God's will concerning this matter?" The Bible clearly shows that divine guidance is a reality to those who put their trust in God.

F. B. Meyer sets forth a three-test formula for finding God's will that is practical and concrete:

"When I was crossing the Irish Channel one dark, starless night," he said, "I stood on the deck by the captain and asked him, 'How do you know Holyhead Harbor on so dark a night as this?'"

"The captain said, 'You see those three lights? Those three must line up behind each other as one, and when we see them so united we know the exact position of the harbor's mouth.'

"When we want to know God's will there are three things which always concur—the inward impulse, the Word of God and the trend of circumstances! God in the heart, impelling you forward; God in His Book, corroborating whatever He says in the heart; and God in circumstances, which are always indicative of His will. Never start until these three things agree."

Lord, I do not ask You for an easy path to follow—only a plain one.

Wednesday, February 2

Presence

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—Matthew 28:20

A teenage girl who attended a youth seminar at the Oral Roberts University last summer received a wonderful experience with the Lord while there. Bubbling over with joy, she testified: "I used to have these deep, dark-blue spells come over me and I would feel alone and unhappy. But Jesus has come into my heart and given me great joy—lasting joy. I know that He will be with me always."

Christ is absent from us only in the flesh. He said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you," and, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." Today He lives in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He is by our side. We see Him with our mind and feel Him through our spirit. We touch Him with our faith just as tangibly as did the little woman who touched the hem of His garment and was made whole.

The Psalmist David practiced the presence of God with him at all times. He did not fear the bear, the lion, the giant Goliath or the valley of the shadow of death. In fact, he said, "I will fear no evil." Why? "Because thou art with me."

Whatever our circumstances, whatever our problems, we can rejoice because Christ is with us.

I thank You, dear Lord, that nothing can separate me from Your presence and love.

I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.—Psalm 119:47

A young lady was asked by a friend to explain what is meant by “devotional” reading of the Bible. Her reply was this:

“Yesterday morning I received a letter from one to whom I had given my heart and devoted my life. I freely confess to you that I have read that letter five times, not because I did not understand it at the first reading, nor because I expected to commend myself to the author by frequent reading of his epistle. It was not with me a question of duty, but simply one of pleasure. I read it because I am devoted to the one who wrote it.

“To read the Bible with the same motive is to read it devotionally, and to one who reads it in that spirit it is indeed a letter of love.”

At a time when we are tried, even the touch of the Bible is wonderful and comforting. I often take it to bed with me and sleep with it cradled in my arm. The feel of it gives me confidence, for I know it is true and eternal. In times of discouragement, loneliness or trouble, the Bible gives me strength as nothing else can. Things may be going to pieces all around, but the Word of God is sure and steadfast, an anchor to our soul.

Lord, teach me Your Word. May I feast upon it daily that it may enrich my life.

Friday, February 4

Flow



Give, and it shall be given unto you.—Luke 6:38

An interesting story centers around an aqueduct at Segovia, Spain. It was built in the year A.D. 109 and for eighteen centuries it carried cool water from the mountains to the thirsty city. Then modern pipelines were laid and the old aqueduct was no longer used. Almost immediately it began to fall apart. The dry mortar crumbled; stones loosened and began to fall. A few years of idleness ruined what eighteen centuries of service had not destroyed.

The Bible tells us of a servant who was given one talent and was rebuked by his master, not because he had stolen it, or misappropriated it, but rather because he had done nothing with it.

Life, because of its very nature, flows. It has movement, it travels. It is kept full and sweet so long as it gives. We are channels, not reservoirs. The moment we cease to serve we stagnate and suffer. We lose peace of mind, happiness, enjoyment in living and even the health of our bodies. James says in his epistle, "Pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Whatever our need may be, we shall receive an abundant supply as we give to others, whether of thought, or prayer, or material things.

Lord, let streams of blessing flow through my life.

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.—Matthew 21:22

Faith is simply believing that God will do what He says He will do. To illustrate I would like to tell you about an incident that happened in our home while I was away at a crusade:

My wife, Evelyn, and the children had retired for the night when my son Richard called to his mother. He told her he had such a headache that he was unable to sleep. Evelyn prayed for him and told him to believe the Lord and go to sleep. Just as she was about to doze off to sleep, Richard called her again. He said, "Mother, the prayer didn't help a bit. I can't go to sleep. My head still hurts."

Evelyn sat on the side of his bed and said, "Richard, if you were to ask me, your mother, to go to the kitchen and get you a glass of water, do you think I would do it?" He said, "Of course." "Well," she said, "Jesus said in His Word that if we ask anything in His name and we believe, He will do it for us. Now, do you believe that if we ask Jesus to heal you, He will do it?" Richard thought a moment and said, "Well, yes, I do."

They prayed again, and in five minutes Richard was sound asleep. The headache was gone. It was nothing but simple faith.

Lord, may I erase doubt by faith in Your Word and by believing that You will do what You said You would.

Sunday, February 6

Prosperity

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.—Psalm 24:1

God is a God who wishes to share His abundance with us; therefore, it is right for us to pray for prosperity and desire it. However, it does depend upon what we are going to do with our gain. A person's attitude could spoil something which is otherwise good. If we love God more than we love anything in the world, and our desire is to get material wealth to use as an instrument for His glory, then it is right to pray for prosperity.

But it can also be wrong. It depends upon the person. Material wealth takes after the person who has it. If he is wicked, his goods are wicked. If he is righteous, his goods are righteous. A person who thinks every minute about money and goes headlong after the pursuit of it, regardless of the principles involved, is wrong. At the same time, when a man or woman seeks God and has a desire to use the product of his labors for God's glory, that person is right and can expect prosperity from God.

Zaccheus, when he was converted, said he would give half of his wealth to the poor. (Luke 19:8.) The proper use of his wealth was a beautiful thing, just as the wrong use of it had been despicable.

Prosper my labors, O Lord, that I may use my prosperity for Your glory.

Prisoner

Monday, February 7

The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.—Job 42:10

An unforgiving spirit holds us captive. Wrong attitudes toward others keep us a prisoner as much as if we were behind bars. No one goes through this world without suffering offenses. But it is not necessary for us to hold an unforgiving spirit because of those offenses. Forgiveness is one of the powers of God's divine love. This ability does not lie within us. But God's grace and love that pardoned us also enable us to forgive those who wrong us.

I remember some years ago that a certain man was a "thorn in the flesh" to me. I couldn't accept him, I couldn't reject him and I couldn't get rid of him. When I thought of our situation I was even convinced that I had every right to harbor the resentments I felt toward him. But one day the Lord whispered to my heart, "Oral, neutralize this man by forgiving him." God helped me and I did it.

When I forgave the man, the thorn was gone. Miraculously, he never bothered me from that moment to this. My ill feelings and resentment toward him had actually held me captive. I was the one who was suffering. When I forgave him, I freed myself. Today I have a sweet and wholesome feeling toward this man because I neutralized him with forgiveness.

In my day-to-day relationships with others, Lord, help me to have a forgiving spirit.

Tuesday, February 8

Fussing

Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.—Hebrews 12:1

An elderly woman had long planned to take her first plane ride to a large city a short distance away. Finally the day of the trip arrived. She boarded the plane and chose a seat near the window. There would be so much to see! But first, she checked the list of things she was supposed to have done before leaving home and the list of things she was going to do in the city. She sized up the passengers around her and adjusted the window shade for a better view. Scarcely had she settled down to enjoy the trip when the light flashed on asking the passengers to fasten their seat belts for landing.

"Oh, my!" said the little old lady. "If I had known I would be here so soon, I wouldn't have wasted my time 'fussing.'"

Life is a journey and each day brings us closer to our destination. When we are guilty of squandering our time in fussing with nonessentials and worrying over matters which can be put into God's hands, we miss the many blessings along the way. Such blessings as winning a lost soul to Christ, visiting the sick or spending more time with the family and teaching our children or grandchildren God's Word. These are the vital issues of life—the essentials.

Lord, help me to lay aside the weight of nonessentials in my life.

All that I have is thine.—Luke 15:31

One day officers walking down the streets of London came upon a tattered, little boy leaning over a garbage can. When they reached in and pulled him out, they saw a face caked with dirt and hair that was filthy and uncombed. He had no home, so the officers took him to a children's home. It was dinnertime. As the lad stood in the hallway, he could see the dining table spread with a delicious, piping-hot meal, ready to eat. But one look at the boy and the nurse decided he should have a bath before he ate.

She took him to the bathroom, turned on the hot water, poured in soap and began to rip off the child's clothes. As she bathed him, she noticed he had something clenched in one hand so tightly that she was unable to wash off the grime and filth. Only after much prying and coaxing was she able to open the tiny fist. There she saw a piece of molded bread. Though a lovely meal was on the table waiting for him, he found comfort in the stale crumb.

We often cling tenaciously to yesterday's crumbs of blessings for a sense of security, when God has a more abundant provision for us today. We need not be satisfied with less than God's best.

O God, help me to live and work on a daily renewal of Your abundance in my life.

Thurs., February 10

King's Touch

Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him.—Mark 1:41

It was the practice in the days of Edward the Confessor of England for the sick to come and kneel before him to receive his "healing" touch. The custom of the "king's touch" was passed on by the royal line to Queen Anne, when it ceased.

The Bible is filled with accounts of the real *King's Touch*—one when Jesus laid His hand on the leper and said, "Be thou clean." Immediately the leprosy departed from him and he was cleansed. This same King is still touching the lives of people today, binding up the brokenhearted and opening the prison to them that are bound with sin or sickness. Millions have known the joy of His blessed touch.

A picture published recently showed a little boy's face radiant with pleasure as our president patted him on the head. No doubt, he will never forget that touch and will tell of it often to his friends. Neither will we, who were once lepers—or sinners—ever forget the touch of the Master's hand. As we grow older in our experience, we will still refer to it with wonder and pride as the Apostle Paul did, who stood before great men and recounted his conversion. (Acts 22.) The *King's Touch* was the highlight of his life.

O Jesus, lay Your hand on my life. Heal me within and without.



Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.—James 2:17

An old Scottish boatman, who made his living by taking passengers across a lake in his rowboat, had carved on one of the oars the word, *Faith*, and on the other, *Works*. A passenger noticing this asked why these words were carved there.

The old man said, "I will show you." He laid aside the oar inscribed *Works* and used only the one with *Faith* carved on it. The boat went around in circles. He then used the one with the word *Works* and laid down *Faith*. The boat went in circles in the opposite direction.

After this demonstration, he picked up both oars and began using them together. The boat moved ahead in a straight line over the water. He explained to his passenger, "That is the way it is in the Christian life—one is no good without the other."

In every age, the Christian is warned against the error of thinking it is enough for men to profess a religious belief without time and effort for good works. Faith, which saves, and works, which serve, are inseparable. A living faith demands daily works. We will find our own little ship of life going around in circles if we omit one of them.

Dear Lord, help me to serve You better through faithful works.

Saturday, February 12

Cross It

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.—Matthew 6:34

A story is told of Abraham Lincoln in his circuit-riding days. Lincoln and his companions, riding to the next session of court, had crossed many swollen rivers. The Fox River was still ahead of them and they began to worry. "If these streams give us so much trouble," they said, "how shall we get over Fox River?"

They stopped for the night at a log tavern. Here they met a Methodist, presiding-elder of the district, who rode through the country in all kinds of weather and who knew all about Fox River. Anxiously, they began to quiz him about the state of the river.

"Oh, yes," replied the elder, "I know all about the Fox River. I have crossed it often and understand it well. But I have one fixed rule with regard to Fox River. *I never cross it till I reach it.*"

How much happier our Christian walk would be if we would learn to commit tomorrow's cares and problems into God's hands today. Worry does not solve any of our problems, but faith in God does. Faith embraces the promises of God in a definite act of belief—not just in those times when circumstances look promising, but in times of testing when things look most difficult.

Dear Lord, help me to trust You more.

Opposites

Sunday, February 13

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.—Matt. 5:6

All of life is a result of the marriage of opposite laws. For instance, in the laws of electricity, it takes the negative wire and the positive wire, in proper relationship, to produce light. In the kingdom of God it takes the negative and the positive—opposites—coming together to produce life.

This means it is impossible for us to meet Jesus in our own righteousness. A lot of people try to become "good enough" to meet Him. That is like trying to get enough money to get married. You'll never make it. We can't have our righteousness and His, too. It takes our sins to get His righteousness.

Jesus said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Again He said, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick." So we come to Jesus just as we are—in our need.

On that glorious level, He takes our nothing and gives us everything. Like the prodigal son, we bring Him our bruised feet and worn-out shoes. He furnishes us a new pair of shoes. We bring a tattered-and-torn coat with the smell of the pigpen on it. He presents us with a new robe. On the level of our need—whatever it is—God reveals Himself.

Without pretense or coverup, Lord, I acknowledge my needs. Meet them now, I pray.

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A reader from Alaska writes:

A few months ago my mother who lives in North Carolina sent me a year's gift subscription to DAILY BLESSING. Since that time this little book has grown to mean so much to me. I keep it in my desk and read it every day before I go about my tasks. It seems the passages are written just for me. My mother has given me so many gifts during my lifetime, but none has grown so close to my heart as this one.

Now I would like to share this wonderful spiritual insight with my fellow workers. I enclose my check

Monday, February 14

Verse

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!—Psalm 119:103

An old-fashioned picture hangs in a modern home today, not just as a reminder of childhood days, but for the constant inspiration it has given through the years. It is one of several pictures that hung in the old home—beautifully illustrated verses of scripture. The owner remembers the days when they were just a welcome interruption whenever she and the other children became tired or confused with their game of counting the flowers in the wall-paper.

One verse, "My grace is sufficient for thee," particularly intrigued the children, because it was completely beyond their understanding. So in very adult fashion, they decided to consult the dictionary. They found that "Grace" was defined as *God's assistance*, and "sufficient" was explained as *an exact amount*—no more, no less. The children were delighted with their findings and after this research work, they always read this verse according to Webster: "God's assistance in exact amount."

This childhood interpretation, so little understood then, has been a constant source of strength throughout the years. Time has proven that God's grace has been sufficient in exact amount for every need.

Thank You, Lord, for Your unfailing faithfulness to me in every time of need.

Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends.—John 15:15

"What is your secret?" asked the poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning of Charles Kingsley. An outstanding novelist and minister, professor of modern history at Cambridge University, his enthusiasm, zeal and energy made him a great reformer of his time. Mrs. Browning knew that there must have been an influence behind the life of this remarkable man.

Kingsley's answer was simple. "I had a friend." God had given Charles Kingsley a wise and true friend at the time when his character was maturing and he was making his life's decisions. The friendship had been an important factor in Kingsley's life.

On the way to Gethsemane and betrayal, Jesus drew His disciples into a close intimacy with Himself. They had called Him "Master," and "Lord," but now He said, "Ye are my friends." He was going away, but this bond of friendship was to endure beyond the Cross and resurrection and become a life-long relationship. So it is today. Christ is a friend who "sticketh closer than a brother." We never need to feel friendless or forsaken, for Christ is by our side. His warm, strong friendship will support us in every moment of need, and make us what we ought to be.

O Christ, what a privilege I have to call You "Friend!"

Wed., February 16

Upward Look

I will lift up mine eyes.—Psalm 121:1

A young man once found a \$5 bill on the street. From that time on he always walked with his eyes gazing downward, looking for whatever he could find. In the course of years he accumulated 29,516 buttons, 54,172 pins, 12 pennies, a bent back and a miserly disposition. How much he missed!

Emerson, the great poet, said, "The sky is the bread of the soul." There is a great sermon in the sky. The Psalmist said, "The heavens declare the glory of God Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psalm 19:1-3).

Look up into the expanse and infinity of the sky. The heavens that God has put above us are indicative of the immensity of His mercy and His limitless power to perform His promises to us. They tell us that this world is not our permanent dwelling place, that somewhere in that vastness God is preparing a place for those who love Him. To read about the omnipotence of God and how He created all things is like taking a deep breath of fresh air.

When we look up—to Heaven and to God "from whence cometh our help"—earth's problems seem to diminish. They are as nothing in the light of His power to solve them.

Father, keep me ever looking to You.

The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me.—John 16:27

A minister-evangelist had a great grief in his life. He had a 12-year-old son who was spastic. All those years, during the time he was able to be home, he worked with his son to say two words. One day he came home from a distant town where he had been holding revival meetings. His son was sitting in his wheelchair, his head sunk on his chest. The evangelist embraced his wife and then said, "And how is my little man?" The child lifted his head for a moment and said distinctly, "Hi, Dad!"

The minister broke down in tears, saying through his sobs, "At last! He finally knows who I am!"

All our lives God waits and works with us until at last we come to know Him. The moment that we come to Him and recognize that He is our Father and we belong to Him, is a precious moment to God.

The poignant story of the Prodigal Son which Jesus told recognizes the same situation. A father waiting for the return of his son; the son saying, "I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father!" Afterwards, when we realize the deep love that waits for us, the strong arms that enfold us, the joy that is ours and His, we wonder why we stayed such a longtime away.

Heavenly Father, I cherish my sonship and Your love for me.

Friday, February 18

Worship

Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum . . . with pure frankincense.—Exodus 30:34

God gave to Moses a formula for a sweet incense which was to be offered on the altar of the Tabernacle at the time of worship. It symbolizes the attitude of our hearts when we come before Him to worship and to pray.

From the highlands of Gilead came the stacte. This spice came from the stacte tree from which seeped a creamy substance. This is like the outburst of praise and thanksgiving which always precedes true prayer. The onycha came from the depths of the Red Sea, from a perfume crab. From it was extracted a drop of costly fragrance. This was the second spice showing that prayer comes from the depths of a sincere heart. From the galbanum shrub of Syria came the third spice. When broken, thick ointment flowed from its large joints, a symbol of prayer from a broken and contrite heart which goes straight to God. Frankincense was added, which speaks of the perfections of Christ and His sacrifice. Prayer is complete only when offered in His name.

The incense speaks of the value of the prayers we offer to God, and how precious they are to Him.

Heavenly Father, may I value more this place of communion and release in Your presence.



If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.—John 13:17

A lapidarist—a connoisseur of gems and precious stones—can take an inexpensive gem and by treating it with an X ray, turn it to another color so that it will look like a genuine gem of precious price. But the moment it is exposed to the sunlight it returns to its natural color.

Greater than all the silver and gold, more than all the gems of precious price, more than any desire to be great or to do great things is the desire to be a faithful, sincere, happy Christian. Such are God's jewels. He values them above all the wealth of the world. He does not judge us by our intellectual or any other attainment, nor by any of our financial or other achievements, but by the genuineness of our heart.

It is not enough just to be a Christian, but to be Christ-like, happy, Spirit-filled Christians reaching out in love even to those who dislike us. The Christian life is the most difficult life on earth. It is a challenge to live as Christ lived. As we begin to drink of God's grace and be filled daily with the power of His Spirit, we can conquer giants if we will become a happy Christian.

Dear Lord, make me a happy, Spirit-filled Christian.

Sunday, February 20

Secure

We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.—1 John 4:16

A farmer bought a weather-vane to place on the top of his barn. But before installing it he painted upon it the text, "God is Love." The village clown suggested that he had painted these words on it because he thought God was fickle like the wind. The old farmer replied, "No, sir! I chose those words because God is love no matter which way the wind blows."

The world around us is in constant change. Nations rise and fall, methods and skills become outdated as science moves on in its endless search. Friendships come and go. Heartache, sorrow, joy and laughter alternate in our lives. But no matter how much our surroundings change or our feelings fluctuate, the love of God remains the same. It never changes or has degrees of intensity. God loves us wherever we go or whatever we do. He loves all people everywhere, though He often may not approve of their actions and words.

As we accept this as a fact of our lives, we can have an awareness of His love overshadowing us every moment. The Holy Spirit bears witness in our hearts that we will be tenderly loved and cared for by our Heavenly Father, tomorrow as well as today.

Thank You, Father, for the security of Your love in a changing world.

But Moses' hands were heavy . . . and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands.—Exodus 17:12

Joshua commanded handpicked men in the battle against the Amalekites and won. But the victory was not theirs alone. High on a hilltop overlooking the battlefield, Moses held up his staff before God in intercession for Joshua and his men. As long as Moses' staff was held high, the Israelites gained ground. After a while, Moses' hands grew heavy and he also needed help. Aaron and Hur supported his hands so that "his hands were steady until the going down of the sun."

In all of God's creation there is a law of dependence and mutual relation. The human body is a classic example. Not one part can function perfectly without drawing some help from the other parts. God has planned His spiritual kingdom on the same basis. Not one of His children can do their best job without the help of his fellow Christian.

Today, God is sending His Joshuas into the front-line to win souls for Him. But the battle is not altogether lost or won by the Joshuas. The prayers of each Christian are important to the conflict. A battle may be lost because of an empty prayer closet, or some soul may be won today because our prayers supplemented the efforts of those in battle.

O Master, help me to do my part in the battle against the forces of Satan in the world.

Tuesday, February 22

Better

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.—Proverbs 3:5

From childhood, Bob Sellers had wanted to be a great runner. He laid out a track on his father's farm and spent hours in training. In college, however, he found that despite his years of practice, others were more gifted naturally and he failed to get into the college team.

To forget his disappointment, Bob joined a group of amateur mountain-climbers. Some weeks afterward, as the group slowly ascended a rocky peak, a rock slide seriously injured one of the party. Immediate medical attention was needed, but it was miles away. Leaving the others to care for the injured man, Bob started off for help, running with all the skill and wind gained from his years of practice. Two hours later, he stumbled into a ranger station in time to send help. And so a life was saved.

God has a wonderful way of transmuting disappointments into something of far greater value. He always has something better in mind for us. When success eludes us it is wise to look for God's alternative plan to emerge. Someone has said that disappointments are "His-appointments" . . . ways to bring us into line with something greater which His love has planned for us.

Dear Lord, give me patience to wait the outworking of Your better plan for me.

Patience

Wednesday, February 23

In your patience possess ye your souls.—Luke 21:19

Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned from the people of the Orient is the virtue of patience. Buddha called patience "the greatest prayer." Mohammed said it is "the key to content." Confucius warned his followers that the lack of even a small amount of patience often can upset tremendous undertakings.

But how difficult it is sometimes to be patient. How frenzied we get when our ambitions are not realized as rapidly as we hope! And how easy it is to become impatient with others—forgetting that one of the characteristics of God's indwelling love is "longsuffering." Then, said St. Francis, "Have patience with all things, but chiefly with yourself."

Quiet, brave patience in all difficulty, perplexity and danger was the attitude pressed upon the believers of the Early Church by their inspired teachers. Paul constantly strikes this note. We, like them, have an unfailing resource on which we can depend: God's protecting care, His indwelling, upholding Spirit and the strong assurance that He will cause us to triumph in the end. Not, indeed, by martial victories, but by patient, unyielding loyalty to Jesus Christ, our Conqueror, who shall one day give us a crown of life.

Help me to be patient in all things, Lord, knowing You are with me and for me.

Thursday, February 24

One Step

*Take therefore no thought for the morrow
Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*—Matthew 6:34

The searchers for the lost plane had battled their way for almost eight hours through the ice and snow. The leader peered into the curtain of sleet that was steadily getting worse. He took one final look around as he reluctantly raised his arm to signal his team to go back. At that instant, a figure stumbled into sight. It was the pilot they had been seeking.

In minutes he was on an emergency stretcher and receiving necessary first aid. "We'd given up hope of finding you," the leader said. "How did you ever find your way out of that wilderness?" The pilot smiled. "Well, I just kept putting one foot in front of the other and saying to myself that a quitter never wins and a winner never quits. And suddenly, there you were."

So many of us are overwhelmed by the *totality* of our troubles. They stretch in an unbroken line to the very horizon of our hopes, so that we fail to take them as they come, one step at a time. Today's difficulties can be overcome. It is tomorrow's anxiety that worries us to death. When problems stretch out ahead, let us take them one at a time, tell Christ about it, and conquer through Him.

Dear God, give me the courage and strength that I need for today.

I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.—Psalm 119:162

A businessman, known among his associates for his Christ-like spirit, was asked why he was always happy, even when under pressure.

"I read God's Word frequently," the man replied. "The first thing I do, upon awakening, is to reach for my Bible. I begin my day with God, Himself."

Starting the day with Bible-reading, we tap a reservoir of strength before daily cares have brought their frustrations. God anoints us with His presence and throughout the day, keeps us serene in the midst of turmoil, joyful in times of sorrow, loving when there are disagreements and victorious over temptations. Reading of God's love inspires to greater service, greater compassion and greater accomplishments.

Throughout each day, God's Word guides when we are perplexed and befriends us when we are lonely. It renews our strength when we are weary by encouraging us to place our cares and problems into the hands of God. The Bible holds many spiritual treasures for us all. No less a man than a President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, said, "A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of an intimate knowledge of the Bible."

O God, help me to value Your Word as my choicest treasure.

Saturday, February 26

Shelter



A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.—Isaiah 32:2

The sand constantly drifts across the Israeli desert. When the wind begins to blow hard, the survival of the desert traveler depends upon his finding something that will break the drift of the sand. If he can hide in the shelter of a large rock, he will be protected from the sand's stinging blast.

Christ is to us like a sheltering rock in a desert land. He stands firm against everything that could come against us. He is stronger than sin, stronger than sickness and stronger than death. His arms are always stretched out toward us, inviting us to come out of life's storms and into the serenity of His presence. In Christ there is shelter for everyone and He never turns anyone away.

When the storms of fear, failure, sickness or anxiety begin to blow, we can go to Him for protection and deliverance. No matter what our problems may be, of what kind or intensity, we can have confidence that He will understand, for He also walked this earth. When we are close to Him, He will prevent us from being submerged in the sands of this world. We shall know His protective presence and a constant assurance of security.

*O Christ, hide me in the shelter of Your presence.
May I abide in You forever.*

Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.—Luke 5:4

An old weathered seaman who loved to talk about ships and the sea said, "The safest place for a ship is in a harbor. If it was just built to look pretty and be seen it could be made quite flimsy and cheap. But a ship is designed for the challenge of the open seas. That's where it is useful and fulfilling the purpose for which it was built. Out on the sea, service and durability are more important than beauty!"

God has built us for the challenges of life. In heart and brain and muscle, in soul and in spirit, we have all the equipment we need to face the risks and uncertainties of life, to battle its storms and do great things for God and His world. To live idly and at ease may be pleasant but does not fulfill the purpose and plan of God when He sent us into the world. When we are being tossed about on the open seas of life it is good to remember that we are where the victories are won.

We need not fear when the going gets rough. When the disciples were out on the sea of Galilee with Jesus, and a storm arose, they found that "even the winds and the sea obey Him." With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm.

O Lord, give me the courage to face every challenge of life with a daring faith.

Monday, February 28

Spirit

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.—Zechariah 4:6

When God's people returned from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple of the Lord, He wanted them to know that the numbers against them and the opposition they faced would not keep His house from being built. He was telling them, "Don't depend on the might or power of man, but on My Spirit. Nothing can stop that."

When John Knox thundered forth his sermons in the churches of Scotland, he was very much in the minority. Queen Mary, better known as Bloody Mary of Scots, had a price on his head. But even this did not stop the anointed words of John Knox, for the Holy Spirit is greater than numbers, greater than threats and persecution. These things do not affect the might and power of God's Spirit.

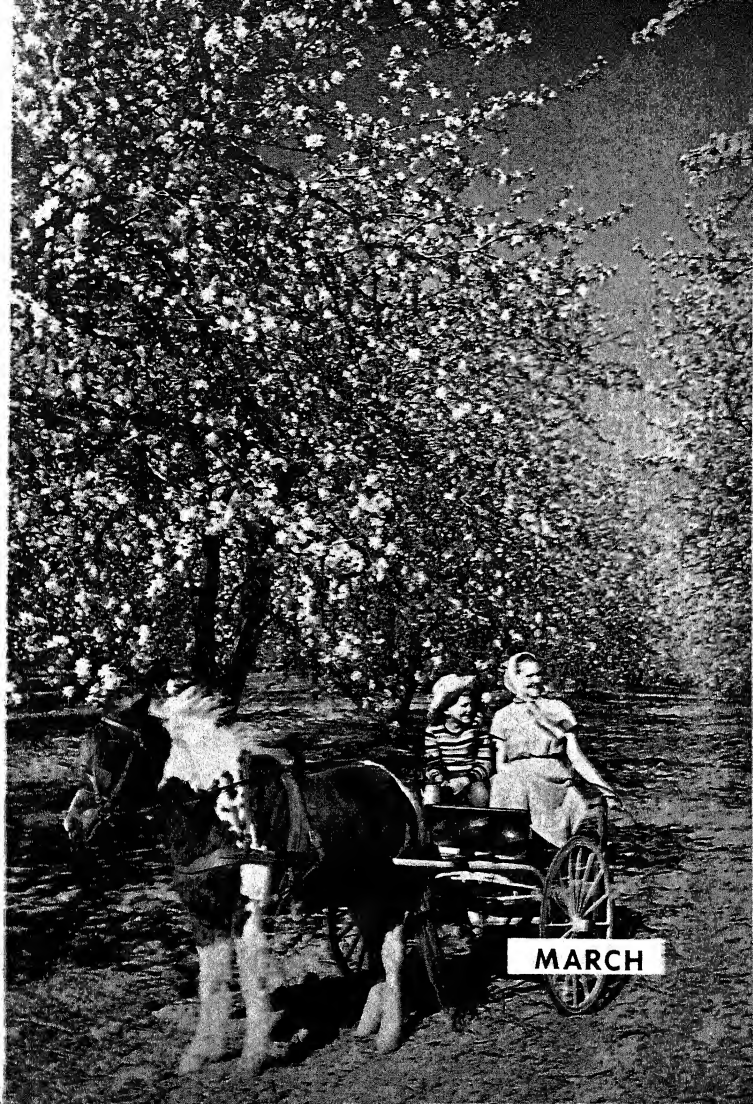
Our power to accomplish a work for God today is not found in the might of well-organized plans or in the might of great financial security. Although these are means that God can use, they are not the key. Jesus said that we would receive power after the Holy Ghost came upon us—a means of might that cannot be stopped, cannot be bluffed, cannot be bought, cannot be enticed to compromise, but which gives us a common goal. That goal is to build up God's kingdom and to accomplish His will on earth.

Lord, may I depend on Your Spirit always.

A Springtime Heart

Lord let me keep a springtime heart
The whole year through.
A heart as brave
As April's bluest skies;
As gay
As trumpet daffodils
That wave from tender slopes.
As full of song
As morning's birds whose feathered throats
Throb with the ecstasy of dawn.
Lord, let my springtime heart stay warm
As southern skies that bless the earth,
Urging the leaf to spread its lace,
Coaxing the bud to lovely birth...
And may it, like each blooming tree,
Give of itself, for love of Thee!

Marie Daerr



MARCH

Creation

Tuesday, March 1

We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.—Ephesians 2:10

While on a visit to Kentucky, Evelyn Roberts wrote: "If you have ever seen the blue-green pastures of Kentucky, you will appreciate God's creation perhaps more than you have ever done before. The colors God has used there are not gaudy, nor do they hurt the eyes. The green of the grass and the blue of the sky are in perfect harmony. With horses and cows grazing in the pastures and little colts and calves kicking up their heels in play, I thought how perfectly our creator God has planned this harmonious symphony of color.

"The beauty seen in His creation is also seen in the lives of people who follow Christ. A life full of God's love, perfectly balanced between the spiritual and material things of life, is a joy to behold. Nothing about such a Christian is gaudy or pretentious. Joy shines through his personality like the sun shining from the blue sky on to the green fields.

"We may never be perfect in the sight of men, but God looks on the heart and judges us by the motives behind the things we do. We are His creation, and through His Son our lives can be made beautiful and perfect in His sight."

May my life be a harmony of praise to You, my God.

Wednesday, March 2

Unworthy

He hath made him to be sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—
2 Corinthians 5:21

Recently I was visiting in the home of some friends. The husband and father of this home was suffering with dreadful ulcers. They asked me a question concerning healing that I'm sure troubles many people. "Brother Roberts," they said, "how can anyone be good enough for God to heal him?"

I said to them. "It is not your goodness, but God's goodness." I explained that God expects us to do our part, and there is a definite part that we are to perform in our healing, but we are not to lose sight of the fact that God is love. When we come before Him, He is looking for one thing—not a feeling of personal holiness in ourselves, but a spirit of unworthiness in us.

The Roman centurion who came to Jesus to ask for healing for his servant didn't have any spiritual laurels to lean upon. He said, "Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof." (Matthew 8:5-13.) Certainly the centurion should have felt unworthy. But the Bible teaches us that at our best we are not what we ought to be except in Christ Jesus. There is only one way to the heart of God, and that is through the goodness of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Because of Your goodness, Lord—not mine—I ask You to make me every whit whole.

Roasting

Thursday, March 3



The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting.—Proverbs 12:27

Have you ever done this? You have a good day fishing at the lake or out hunting in the woods and you come home with a good catch. But, when you get home, you are too tired to clean and cook the game. So you give it away. You do not smell the delicious aroma as it cooks, nor do you enjoy the eating of it. It does not become part of you.

When you read your Bible this morning, did you close it and forget it? Or did you go back and re-read the part that impressed you so that you could meditate upon it during the day for strength to your soul?

To digest their food, certain animals chew the cud, or ruminates. "Ruminates" has the same meaning as the word "meditate," which means *to turn over and over in the mind*. Paul said to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things . . . that thy profiting may appear to all." Our favorite texts are sure to be those that we have not only read but also meditated upon. Then they become part of our experience as we test them and prove them in our lives, and the Holy Spirit will bring them to our remembrance when we need them.

Lord, let Your Word be sweet to my taste as I meditate upon it today.

Friday, March 4

No Secret

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father.—
Matthew 10:32

A young college student said, "After the Lord saved me, I wanted to become a soul winner. I longed to share with others what I had burning in my heart. But I didn't know how. The Holy Spirit prompted me one day with the thought that the only way to start being a soul winner was to start. So I did. Once I broke the ice and began witnessing to one, it became easier to witness to another."

Witnessing to others about Jesus Christ is a vital part of a Christian's spiritual life, for *God has no secret believers*. Those who have received God's marvelous grace and mercy are stirred up with divine discontent—dissatisfaction—unless they are daily sharing the good news. No Christian is exempt, for the word of faith is in our mouths. It is the message that sinners and those in trouble are longing to hear.

The Holy Spirit ever seeks to exalt Christ, for, if He is lifted up, men will be drawn to Him. He seeks willing workers, for the work is accomplished by means of divine-human reciprocity. "Without God, I cannot. Without me, He will not." Each worker, however weak, is effectively equipped for the exciting task of soul winning if his life is yielded to God.

Make me a soul winner for You, O God.

Afraid

Saturday, March 5

Be not afraid, only believe.—Mark 5:36

The first feeling you and I have when confronted with a desperate situation is fear. It seems that immediately we become frightened. I know what fear is. One of the reasons I believe God has called me to the deliverance ministry is because in one way or another I have been through most of the things that people pass through.

I was frightened as I grew up. Probably that is why I stammered so badly, for doctors believe that stammering is about ten percent organic and about ninety percent functional, called more or less a nervous affliction. When I became really scared, I could not say one word. I've been asked my name and could not say it, because fear paralyzed my vocal cords.

Fear is a dreadful thing and it comes from our own creation. God did not give it to us. Jesus always said, "Fear not. Only believe."

Faith is believing.

Believing what?

Believing that God is a good God and that He loves and cares for us. Believing that He is a God of all power and that He wishes to use that power on our behalf. Believing that nothing is impossible to God nor to people who believe in Him.

My life is in Your keeping, O Father. May I look to You with perfect trust and confidence.

Sunday, March 6

All

My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.—Phil. 4:19

When God's Word says *all* our need, it includes more than physical provision. Many Christians worry about the salvation of their loved ones more than they pray about it. We can claim *all* the promises of God's Word, which include the salvation of our loved ones. This is a need.

When Hudson Taylor was about fifteen years of age, he went to the library one day to get a book to read. Mrs. Taylor, who was 80 miles away from home visiting friends, became greatly burdened for the salvation of her son. She went to her room, locked the door, fell upon her knees and resolved to remain there until her prayers were answered.

At that time Hudson was looking for a book to read in the library. In doing so, he noticed a tract entitled, *The Finished Work of Christ*. As Hudson began to read it, conviction fell upon him. There was only one escape. He knelt and accepted Christ as his own with great joy. Miles away, his mother received a consoling peace that God had heard and answered her prayer. When Mrs. Taylor returned home, Hudson met her with the news. With joy she said, "I know, my son." God is faithful and wants to meet *every need* that we have if we will trust Him.

Teach me to stand upon Your Word, Lord, and to know that it is Your will to supply every need.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.—2 Corinthians 5:19

When someone voluntarily runs a great risk for another, we say of that person, "He stuck his neck out." This phrase comes out of a story of a battle fought by the United States Marines in one of the early wars of this country.

An American ship had engaged an enemy vessel, and the Marines had boarded the enemy craft coming to hand-to-hand fighting with the foe. Suddenly a Marine saw his commanding officer lying on the deck in great danger. An enemy sword was raised over the officer and in another instant the commander would have been dead. Without thought for his own welfare, the Marine sprang forward and literally interposed his own body between the descending sword and his beloved officer. The death-dealing sword, aimed for the heart of the commander, fell upon the neck of the heroic Marine. He "stuck his neck out" to save another.

Even so, God in Christ interposed His own head between the sword of divine judgment and men who were condemned to die because of sin. Jesus lived as a man, suffered as a man, labored as a man, wept as a man and finally died on the cross that you and I might be saved. He "received the stroke that was our due." This is the love of God for us.

Thank You, Lord, for dying for me.

Tuesday, March 8

Song

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.—Philippians 4:4

The robin has a lovely trait that is unique. He sings just as well during a rain shower as he does in the bright sunshine. Most other birds are silent during a rain, but some of the robin's most joyous notes are heard in a downpour of rain.

There is a saying, "When it rains it pours." God's message to the discouraged and troubled heart that is experiencing a "downpour" is: *The joy of the Lord is your strength.* Such joy does not depend on the elements or the circumstances of life but on the comforting presence of Jesus Christ in the soul.

The writer of the beautiful and inspiring hymn, "He Keeps Me Singing," found this to be true. To sing the song, one would think it was written by a man who was rejoicing because life was beautiful and all was going well. To the contrary, the author's heart was heavy with grief as he penned the immortal words of the song that has lifted millions of other hearts in their time of despair. L. B. Bridgers had just received news of the death of his wife and children in a fire which destroyed their home.

The indestructible hope in God that lies in the bosom of those who love Him bursts forth in song in the time of need and gives amazing strength.

O Lord, let Your praises be continually in my mouth.

Detours

Wednesday, March 9

They assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.—Acts 16:7

“We had nearly reached our destination when a detour sign sent us down a side road,” said a father recalling the family’s vacation. “The children were tired and my wife and I groaned at the thought of another delay in reaching the vacation spot. The detour, however, took us on a very scenic river-side drive. The road followed the contour of the mountain, overlooking the beautiful, winding river below. We came upon a quaint famous one-room school we had heard about but had never had the privilege of seeing. Looking back on that vacation, *the family remembers the detour as the best part.*”

On the Christian journey we are sometimes turned aside from our well-laid plans. Unexpected changes frustrate and disappoint us. Yet, in time, we may discover that the unplanned detours are often God’s hand and they provide the spiritual enrichment we could not experience otherwise.

Paul, in his travels, repeatedly was forced to detour from his planned itinerary. But in this he was always conscious of the guiding hand of God. We, too, can follow the bidding of the Holy Spirit with complete trust, knowing God is leading us—*even in the detours.*

Help me not to fret at the detours and delays in my life, Lord. Teach me to trust You more.

Thursday, March 10

Spider

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you.—Joshua 1:3

Scotland's strongholds had been captured by the English when Robert Bruce was crowned its king. Immediately he set out to win back his kingdom. He suffered many defeats in battle and finally had to go into hiding because there was a price on his head.

Disconsolate, one day he lay in a cave ready to give up. His attention was drawn to a spider attempting to spin a web over the mouth of the cave. The spider swung in mid-air many times before the first silken thread was finally thrown across the cave. An old Italian proverb says, "For a web begun, God gives thread." Not until the spider hurled itself into space was the thread spun. Inspired by the spider's lesson, King Robert went out to win the celebrated battle of Bannockburn, which brought about Scotland's independence.

Many times we stand back and accept defeat, afraid to step out on God's promises. But we do not tap the resources of God until we launch out in faith. The priests of Israel had to first put their feet into the waters of the Jordan before it parted. God's promises are not "just for somebody else." They are for *you*. We need not be afraid to go boldly forward on the strength of God's Word.

Lord, grant me the courage to step out by faith on Your promises.

Evidence

Friday, March 11



Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.—John 15:16

A man in desperate need called on the president of a bank who had once promised to loan him one hundred dollars. Having forgotten the incident, the banker demanded evidence that he had ever made such a promise. The man thrust a paper into his hands. "Here is my proof." Written on the paper with signature affixed were these words: "Upon presentation of this note, I promise to lend an amount up to one hundred dollars."

The man got the money. It was not solely his need which secured the loan, but also the clear evidence of the banker's promise that he presented.

To me, the clearest evidence in the world for healing is Christ's personal promise in John 10:10: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Here Christ specifically offers to give us all that is implied in the word *abundant*, to make us more than what we are, and to give us more than what we have. He offers to us health, wisdom, and the forces of His own Spirit. Certainly faith can act upon such clear evidence, for every promise of God is valid and negotiable.

O Lord, let my faith rest in the clear promise of Your Word.

Saturday, March 12

Love

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.—1 John 4:18

One of life's greatest challenges—or tribulations—is the matter of making important decisions. At times, when so much hangs in the balance, we become strangled with uncertainty and fear. Sleepless nights and fervent prayers may not produce an answer, and often we would like to evade the issue, but we cannot. Right or wrong, we must make a decision. Here is how one woman solved her dilemma:

“At a very difficult crossroads in my life, I confided my dilemma to an elderly woman whom I respected, with the hope of getting some directional aid that might help me to make the right turn. From out of her rich Christian experience, she offered this very profound advice. ‘One cannot be entirely certain of the wisdom of a personal decision in a matter, but if it is based on love, it will be more nearly in accord with the Heavenly Father’s plan, for God is love.’

“Through the years, I have followed her advice, but I have found love to be a very demanding taskmaster in the matter of decisions. Others, instead of self, must be given first consideration. Whether or not my ‘love’ decisions have been always right, I have been richly rewarded, because I have always found peace.”

Lord, may love be always my first consideration.

Warmth

Sunday, March 13

When I am weak, then am I strong.—2 Corinthians 12:10

Swimming at night is a delightful experience. When the air cools down to the point that it would seem too cool for swimming, it is then that the water feels the warmest and best to the swimmer. The surrounding cool air acts only to make the water seem much warmer. Few people swim at night, however, because they have the mistaken idea that the temperature of the water is the same as that of the surrounding air.

God's love and tender care is warmest when we return to Him from a long, cold departure. His strength is the greatest when we find ourselves very weak. His resources prove to be more abundant in our time of deepest need. However, we have an inclination to judge God's position and His disposition by our own, and thus we fail to approach Him when we need Him most.

Paul had learned the lesson that true strength comes out of weakness. Christians have a wonderful opportunity of showing to the world that our God is not hindered by adverse circumstances. He heals the most broken heart, forgives the vilest of sins, gives victory in our failures, proves to be all-sufficient. Let us remember that the waters of His love are warmest in coldest times.

Dear God, I rejoice in the warmth of Your love.

Monday, March 14

Spring

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.—Song of Solomon 2:12

It was spring! A woman sat in her kitchen feeling very sorry for herself because of all the house cleaning that lay ahead for her. Then she heard the birds singing up a storm in the yard, and went out to investigate. Maybe a cat was chasing them! But there was nothing wrong. The birds were just giving voice to their happiness because it was spring. They made her feel happy just listening to them. So she got out a ladder and started cleaning windows.

"Listen to those birds," she said to a neighbor. "Did you ever hear anything like it? Their singing is positively inspiring." Her face which had been so woebegone beamed with radiance.

Her neighbor watched her for a moment as she renewed her assault on the window panes, singing to match the birds. Then as the magic of birdsong began to take hold on his heart, he turned and whistled his way back to his own yard. Suddenly there came to him the words of an ancient sermon: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun." And he felt quite certain that this moment of sun-drenched spring was a time and a season for singing.

Today, dear Lord, I will praise You with my whole heart for all Your goodness to me.

I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—Galatians 2:20

A Chinese king once asked a philosopher this question—"What are the three things that make a state strong and secure?"

The philosopher answered, "A strong army, bread and faith."

"Which is the strongest of the three?" asked the king.

"Faith," replied the wise man. Then he added, "An army may revolt and bread alone will not make people happy, so faith is the strongest. When people sincerely believe in a cause, they are willing to die for it."

Whatever we take with us into this new year, nothing is so indispensable and precious as our faith in God. Material things in themselves are not the answer to complex human problems. They will not sustain our spirit and soul. Faith in God will make us equal to every emergency; sufficient for every extremity; carry us through every eventuality; help us to endure beyond the ordinary. Our spiritual well-being, our physical circumstances, our material needs, our health, will all prosper so that we have no lack, when our trust is in the living God, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, help me to strengthen my faith by using it daily for my needs.

Wednesday, March 16

Melody

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . . all things are become new.—2 Corinthians 5:17

A man who visited Dr. Albert Schweitzer in Lam-barene, Africa, recalls a vivid incident that occurred while he was there. In a corner of the hospital compound there is an old piano, dilapidated and looking virtually useless. One night, after the meal and the reading of the Scripture, Dr. Schweitzer made his way to the piano. The visitor could hardly believe that the great doctor would play such an instrument. But he did just that, sitting down and playing with exquisite touch, till the poverty of the piano was completely forgotten in the harmony that followed.

This, in essence, is the story of our redemption through Christ. Like the piano, we were marred and warped by our wrong living and wrong thinking. Discord, rather than harmony was the keynote of our living. But God came and took over the console of our lives and brought forth cadences of purity, joy and goodness. We were in unison with Him, at peace within ourselves, in accord with others.

It is our contact with God which makes the difference in our response to life. When we are attuned with Him, His thoughts mingle with ours and the harmony of His nature is expressed in our lives.

*Let Heaven's harmony flow through my life,
O God.*

Copilot

Thursday, March 17

There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.—Acts 27:23

The morning traffic was thick and heavy. A woman sat nervously twisting her handkerchief as her husband drove rapidly through fast-moving vehicles. Her anxiety mounted until she felt she could not bear the dangerous, hurried frenzy any longer. Just then a big, loaded truck passed them. On the bumper were the words, "God is my copilot."

The woman considered the driver's silent testimony awhile and then as the truth of the statement surged through her mind a great calmness and serenity took over. "Dear Lord, forgive me," she whispered, "How can I let fear and nervousness tie me up in knots when You are in the car with us?"

Through the turmoils and dangers of modern-day living, God is beside us. Every day can be faced with confidence when we keep aware of His presence and power with us. In Romans 8:32 the Apostle Paul speaks at length of the security of the believer in Christ. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" he asks. Then after a full listing of the things that are against us in this life, he concludes that none of them "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

Dear Lord, I thank You that I can go to my work today knowing that You are with me.

Friday, March 18

Renewal

O God . . . renew a right spirit within me.—
Psalm 51:10

A young man decided to go for a walk during his lunch hour instead of eating in the cafeteria with his business associates. The morning had been long and he wanted to get completely away from the office. In the last few months, the job that he had once treasured had become dull and unimportant to him.

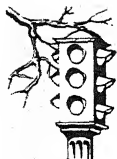
As he strolled along a residential street, an elderly woman, working in her yard, called out cheerfully, "Nice day, isn't it?"

"It is," he agreed. Then, pointing to the bright yellow flowers that she was tending, "Aren't they blooming early?"

"Oh, no. Spring is here," the woman smiled. "I'm anxious to see which of my flowers God will awaken next. He never fails to renew their life."

God renews their life. The phrase went over and over in his mind as the young man walked back to the office. Surely the God who cared enough to awaken the flowers and renew the earth cared for him. Surely He could bring him out of his wintry experience and renew his zeal and the hopes that once inspired him. And there in the clear spring air, he lifted his heart to God and asked Him to restore meaning to every part of his daily routine.

Lord, may I walk in newness of life today.



If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.—John 8:36

A traffic light failed at a busy intersection. Vehicles lined up in all directions. Cars inched forward; no driver was sure what the other was going to do. Brakes screeched to avoid collisions. So often the traffic lights seem a nuisance, but when we watch something like this and maybe are caught in such a traffic jam, we really learn to appreciate our traffic lights. We learn that happiness and freedom depend on adjustment and harmony with laws and regulations.

Living apart from the laws of God may give an illusion of liberty, but such independence actually curtails our freedom and self-fulfillment. To come to the best in life, we need the direction and guidance that God alone can give. Someone has said, "His bondage is perfect freedom." When we subject our lives to the will of God, we have the greatest liberty life can know, because His will involves our greatest happiness and fulfillment.

The Christian is happy for the traffic signals of God. Responding to Him as He speaks to us through His Word and by His Spirit is joy beyond description.

Dear Lord, keep me responding to Your guidance in the decisions of today.

Sunday, March 20

Father

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.—Psalm 103:13

The date on the calendar showed that it was the anniversary of the day her father had gone to Heaven. The woman sighed. Oh, if her father were only here! He would help her to pay for the operation her child needed. He had never failed to help her when he was living. But now she had no one to turn to.

She went along to the prayer meeting at church reaching out for consolation and help. The minister announced the first lines of the opening hymn:

"My Father is rich in houses and lands.

He holds the wealth of the world in His hands."

It was like a voice from Heaven! Suddenly she understood the meaning of the song. Her Heavenly Father was always with her and He would help her! In simple faith, she sank to her knees and gave thanks for the help that was on the way.

The migration of birds each year is not a mere coincidence. The flowers do not just happen to bloom in the spring. The goodness that comes to us is not just chance. The whole universe belongs to God and is guided by Him. When we pray to Him we are in contact with the greatest power in existence. And this God is our Heavenly Father who loves us more than any earthly father loves his child. He is able to meet our needs abundantly.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love to me.

Challenge

Monday, March 21

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—Philippians 4:13

When I was a small boy, a neighbor of ours bought a new Chevrolet. Then one day, in an accident, the car turned over and pinned his son under it. I saw our neighbor pick up one end of that car by himself and lift it completely off his son.

How did he do such a normally impossible thing? God has placed this power to meet challenges within us, and in a moment of stress that God-given power flooded his being so that he became a super-man, well able to meet the challenge.

It has been said, "There are no great men, only great challenges that ordinary men are forced to meet." I think it is more true to say, "There are only great challenges that God helps ordinary men to meet."

Consider the story of Moses. For forty years he had been a shepherd. He was slow of speech. But he was concerned about his people, the Israelites, who were slaves to the Egyptians. And being filled with the Spirit of God, he challenged the mighty Pharaoh of Egypt and succeeded in obtaining the release of the Israelites.

I believe that any person can meet the challenges of life if he will join himself to a power greater than himself . . . the power of the living God.

Help me to meet the challenges of life through faith in You, my God.

Tuesday, March 22

More

Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.—Luke 10:35

Missionaries in Africa looked forward to letters and parcels from their homeland. In one of the packages was a doll for their little daughter. It was prettily dressed and wearing a little checked apron. The thoughtful giver, not satisfied with an ordinary apron, had stitched on two small pockets and tucked into one a scrap of white material as a handkerchief. The doll was received with rapture and the doll clothes examined carefully. The missionaries were amused to hear their little girl repeating over and over with awe: "Two pockets AND a hankie! Two pockets *and* a hankie."

It is the surplus that counts. God did not only give us flowers—He added color and perfume; not just family, shelter and food, but He added love. He did not love us from a distance, but sent His Son to express His love to us. The wonders of salvation are but part of His love's expression, He also gives us the blessings of health and prosperity, and His miraculous intervention in the circumstances of our lives.

If we would be God-like, let us give over and above the necessary, going the extra mile, giving service with a smile, majoring in the things which make life easier and happier for someone else.

Dear God, help me to give to others as generously as You have given to me.

Daffodils

Wednesday, March 23

That ye, being rooted and grounded in love . . . might be filled with all the fulness of God.—Ephesians 3:17, 19

Shakespeare wrote of "daffodils that take the winds of March with beauty." Other poets have sung of the beauty of daffodils. Perhaps this is because they brave the March winds to herald the coming of spring after a long, hard winter. The stem of the daffodil does not break when the March winds blow. It bows and sways but when the storm has passed it stands erect and golden-topped. This is because it is rooted in lifegiving soil, watered and nourished, warmed by the sun.

So often we try to avoid our problems; run away from difficult situations; sometimes we hug our griefs over long. Many break before the strong winds of life. But who, admiring the first spring flowers, does not feel that we all should be able to face our stormy days with the same grace and resilience as the daffodils?

Like the daffodil we need to be firmly rooted in the right soil—faith in the living Son of God. We need to be nourished regularly by the Word of God and kept strong by the daily infilling of the Holy Spirit. Strongly rooted, we can live each day in grace and radiance by the strength which God supplies.

Lord, help me to take time daily for the nourishment of my soul.

Thursday, March 24

God's Will

Jesus . . . went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.—Acts 10:38

God's ability to heal is rarely doubted, but His willingness is often questioned. One person said, "Brother Roberts, you say positively that it is God's will to heal the sick. When you pray for people you lay your hands upon them and pray, 'O Lord, heal.' You don't give God a chance to express His will. You are forcing your will upon Him." Then this person went on to say she knew a boy who was healed and who then turned away from God. He became a criminal and now is in a penitentiary. "Now," she said, "that shows that it is not right to pray for healing unless you say, 'If it be Thy will.'"

The fact that some human being can take a gift or blessing of God and dissipate it and go away from God in spite of it does not cancel out the gracious love of God or His willingness to heal us.

When Christ healed the ten lepers, only one returned. Maybe the nine turned out badly. Maybe one of them became a criminal. We don't know. But God's love is greater than that. Every time it rains, it rains upon the ground of people who are both good and bad, righteous and unrighteous. The love of God is *given* to us. We don't *earn* it. Jesus healed *all* who believed and obeyed, for this was His will.

By faith, Lord, may I receive the benefits of Your provisions for full salvation and health.

Let Go

Friday, March 25

Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.—
Philippians 3:13

Little three-year-old Johnnie had been playing quietly with his toys all morning. His mother was going about her daily chores when suddenly a howl of rage followed by a whimper of fear sent her running to the child. His small fist was imprisoned in a vase. "I dropped my toy in here and now my hand won't come out," he said tearfully. "Drop your toy, Darling," said his mother. "No," he wailed. "Let it go, Johnnie," she insisted. The child obeyed and his hand was free.

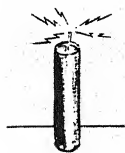
There are things that have power to keep us in a dark prison—old injustices, disappointments, griefs, ailments. Often they are pampered, petted, talked about and brooded over. Shakespeare's witches in his play "Macbeth" give an interesting picture of this. He saw them constantly stirring a boiling cauldron and muttering, "Double, double, toil and trouble." Such concentration on the ills of life are the cause of many breakdowns and heartaches.

There is a key to this prison which brings us into the sunshine of freedom. It is contained in the three little words, "Let it go." Commit and confess the whole matter to the Lord and let Him take over.

Dear Lord, I commit it all to You. Release me from every harassing thought.

Saturday, March 26

One Thing



Thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful.

—Luke 10:41, 42

There is said to be about as much power in a firecracker as there is in a rifle shell, but there is a vast difference in the way the energy is expended. When the firecracker is set off, it explodes equally in all directions without accomplishing anything.

A rifle shell, however, operates on exactly the opposite principle. Instead of releasing its power aimlessly, its strength is focused on a pellet which is propelled toward a target. By channeling its power, it hits its object.

Martha could be termed a “firecracker” Christian—one who expends her energy on paltry non-essentials that achieve very little in a spiritual way. She meant well, but was cumbered with too many things that kept her from communion with Christ.

The Apostle Paul was an example of a “rifle-shell” Christian. He concerned himself with *one thing*. He aimed for a victorious life in Christ by pressing toward the mark with all his might. Consumed with this one desire, he reached the end of his journey, saying, “I have fought a good fight . . . and there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” This is the reward of the Christ-centered Christian.

Lord, make me a “rifle-shell” Christian.

Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—2 Peter 1:21

There is a marvelous unity in the Bible, which is one of the great evidences that God's Spirit controlled the writers of His Word. This unity is even more wonderful when we consider that the Spirit used over forty writers during a period of about sixteen-hundred years.

Some of these writers were farmers, some shepherds, others fishermen, priests, teachers, scribes, statesmen, kings. One was a tax collector and another a physician. Some were rich, some poor. Some were educated, others had few advantages. Yet the whole Bible declares one God, one faith, one Savior and one glorious plan of redemption.

Someone has compared these writers to the instruments in a symphony orchestra. The different instruments have their own "voice." They sound different, yet all are in tune and in perfect harmony with each other. In a similar way the personalities, styles and manner of speaking and writing of each writer are different from the others. Yet God used them all to write down exactly what He wanted them to say, and the messages they gave form a harmonious unity that can speak to the hearts of all people.

Thank You, O God, for the gift of Your Word and for all who spread its truth.

Monday, March 28

Restraint

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.—1 Timothy 3:9

During the winter season, a householder had some very anxious moments when the damper on his furnace did not function properly. Very quickly, the furnace overheated and the danger of fire gutting his house was imminent. Fortunately, however, he was able to remedy the situation before any damage was done.

Dampers are essential, whether as a means to check drafts on heating systems or to regulate human conduct. In life, health of mind and body and the welfare of our soul require them.

God uses dampers in His wisdom and love to our souls. They serve to carry out His purpose for our lives and to bring about our highest good. Conscience, for example, equips us to exercise restraint and to follow after virtue. It holds in check those human passions and impulses that could bring us hurt and ruin. Memory, ripe experience and good judgment are some of the other dampers.

The real joys of living are ours today because dampers are a part of the apparatus of life, a part of our equipment for a life that honors God and is a blessing to others.

Heavenly Father, help me to see only good in the restraints that You put upon me.

Encouraged

Tuesday, March 29

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God.—Isaiah 41:10

A large sum had been offered to the person who could surmount a great bridge by climbing a rope. Many had tried and failed. A young man offered to try it and a crowd gathered below and upon the bridge to watch. He ascended rapidly at first, but the farther he climbed, the slower he went. The people began to cry out, "He'll never make it."

The shouts of the crowd and his own exhaustion brought the young man to a standstill within feet of his goal. He was about to slide back when an old man leaned over the rail and said, "Come on, son. You'll make it." Then others joined in, "You're almost there! Come on!" Gradually he climbed, a foot at a time amid great cheers till he reached the bridge and won the prize.

In Isaiah 41, verses 6-20, God uses a situation of this kind to introduce His own encouragement to every one who is disheartened. In strong yet tender words He strengthens and stimulates the flagging spirit by assurances of His own presence and strength to help us reach our goals. To accept His words into our hearts as God's encouragement to us personally enables us to surmount every difficulty and leap over every barrier triumphantly.

Dear God, I am encouraged today by Your Word. Help me to trust You more.

Wednesday, March 30

Obedience

To obey is better than sacrifice.—1 Samuel 15:22

When approaching God with our needs, we are often tempted to offer Him our sacrifices of "things" and external forms of worship instead of what He desires most—an humble and obedient heart.

One night I was praying for the sick when there was a great crowd present. A woman with flame-red hair came for prayer. As she came near me I realized she was ill. But she was filled with pride and haughtiness. I don't know why I did what I did that night except I knew that God was dealing with me and I knew she could never be healed in that condition.

I said, "Woman, I want you to walk down that long aisle seven times with your hands up, asking for God's mercy." She looked at me with blazing eyes and turned and flounced away. But I knew in my heart I had obeyed God and she had to learn obedience.

She sat down. Then all of a sudden I heard a sound from the audience. And this woman was running up and down the aisle, tears streaming down her face. Before she finished the seventh time, she was crying, "I'm healed! I'm healed!" She lost herself in obedience to God and in so doing linked herself to the limitless power of Christ to meet her need.

O Jesus, may no pride or haughtiness be found in me, but only complete surrender to Your will.

Kindness

Thursday, March 31

Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose.—
Ruth 2:16 *Be ye kind.*—Ephesians 4:32

A young intern cared for a little girl who was brought into the emergency room of a hospital. The next day the child's mother called, asking for the doctor's full name. "He was so very kind to our little girl," she said. The mother did not mention the intern's skill or his technique. His gentleness had won their hearts.

Christ taught His followers to love others and to treat them accordingly. He knew the power of kindness to turn a foe into a friend, to heal hurts, to bring pleasure to lonely hearts and happiness to grieving spirits. Today He wants us to have the blessing that comes to those who are helpful and gentle to others. Our Lord always richly rewards those who give loving service to those in need.

Let us never let a day pass that we fail to drop "handfuls of kindness" purposely into someone's life. Our love for others will show in the tone of our voice, our actions and our smile. As we obey the Biblical commandment "Be ye kind," others will see that Christ dwells in our heart. We will be blessed with a deeper understanding of people and a greater awareness of God's beauty in them.

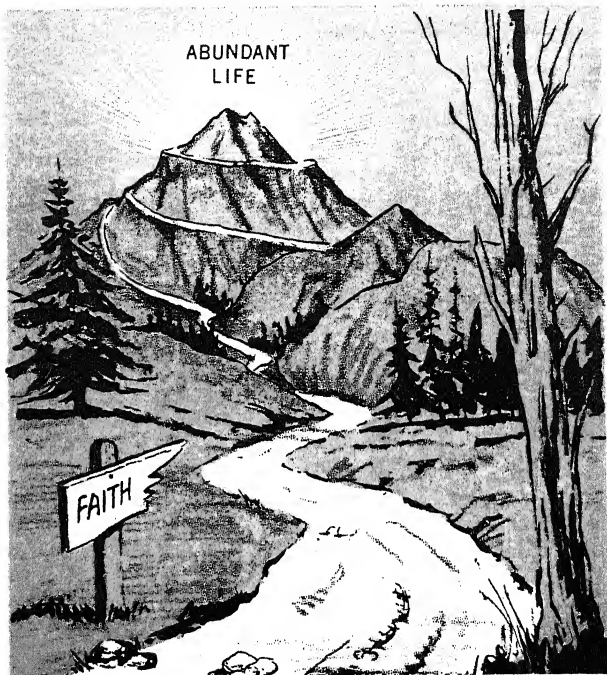
Lord Jesus, let Your love flow through me today.

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Road Signs to Faith

by ORAL ROBERTS



In this article, Oral Roberts introduces you to the *faith you already have*. You were born with it! All you need to do is to release it! This new understanding of faith can put life's joy into your hands in 1966.

IF YOU WERE to come upon a mountain of pure diamonds glittering in the distance, and they were yours if you could but reach it, how long would you risk the chance of losing this treasure by holding back?

Faith is a treasure glittering in the sun, a treasure which awaits us if we reach out to it. Its rewards are measureless.

It makes no sense to hold back, does it? You can change your whole life by believing it is possible through God, for what God *can* do for us, He *will* do for us, as we believe.

I am not saying that it is easy, or that there are any buttons you can press which will turn on your faith in a flash. I understand your doubts. I have known them often. Doubts nag at us and hold us back. Question marks loom before us. Seeming contradictions arise. There is so much we do not understand, so many areas where even the most learned theologians tread with uncertainty. How can we achieve this losing of faith in the face of such obstacles?

I am going to set forth here ten ways—ten road signs which may aid you in achieving your goals in 1966, freeing your faith from all the past uncertainties, from misunderstanding, misdirection.

1. IF YOU DO NOT THINK YOU HAVE FAITH, ASK YOURSELF: WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON I DO NOT BELIEVE?

Is it fear? Intellectual doubts? Emotional blocks? Or sheer lack of interest in my destiny?

Find the answer. Once you know, you can be-

gin to resolve your question. You want to believe, or you would not be interested in the message of DAILY BLESSING.

Start then by finding out how much belief is bound up in your disbelief. How much do you believe in the negative? How strongly do you believe that God won't help you, that He doesn't care about you, won't take care of you? Are you wasting your faith in negation? Is there any kind of logic, spiritual or material, in such an approach?

This is your first step then; to become aware that you *do* have faith, and to begin to turn away from the false to the true, the real, the affirmative.

2. EXAMINE YOUR FEARS FRANKLY.

Fears are the greatest factor in our misuse of faith. We are afraid of poverty, of sickness, of failure, of criticism, of a thousand other cringing things. And each fear keeps us from having faith in ourselves—or in the fact that God will help us.

Pinpoint your fear precisely. Look at it honestly. Ask yourself, "In a world in which a loving God watches over me, does my fear make sense?"

In many cases you will find it makes no sense at all!

But suppose you insist it has some validity, some reason for being. Then why not turn your fear itself over to God? Let Him take your fear and turn it to faith. Don't try to do it all yourself. Let God help you in this matter of fear, and in His very help you will find the faith which will keep that fear from returning.

3. ASK GUIDANCE DAILY FROM GOD IN FINDING AND STRENGTHENING YOUR FAITH IN HIM.

If you are seeking to free your faith from its misinterpretations, do not try to do it alone. God is always ready to help those who seek the way.

4. LEARN TO COMMUNE WITH GOD IN SILENCE, IN ALONENESS.

Do not try to talk to God always, to badger Him with your needs. Learn to listen in the stillness. For the understanding comes. God is there. He has the help you seek. And in that help we receive, our faith gains power.

5. FIND A POINT OF CONTACT.

In the Bible, the woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of Jesus' robe and was healed. That was her point of contact. A point of contact is something which you do, and when you do it you release your faith toward God. Sometimes I tell my radio listeners and television viewers to touch the set as a point of contact for healing. This enables the listener or viewer to reach out with his faith to God. Find your own point of contact—it may be your Bible, a book which has helped you, taking Communion in church, or the one who prays for you—something or someone who will serve as a connecting link between you and the Lord.

6. PUT YOUR FAITH IN ACTION.

This means, first, to overcome the inertia of disbelief or wrong belief by taking some positive step to show that you are ready to open the doors

to the power of faith. Believe actively that you are going to be well, to be helped, to receive in abundance. That is action. This is not to be confused with reckless action. For instance, we should heed our doctor's orders completely; in the proper practice of medicine he serves as an instrument of God's healing, and may often be the avenue God takes to answer your prayer. There are unlimited ways in which we can translate our faith into action.

7. BE THANKFUL FOR ANSWERS TO YOUR FAITH.

It is not merely that God demands thanks. It is rather that our failure to give thanks is a denial of God's power; a failure to recognize that power; therefore it is a negative factor which blocks the continued flow of God's power to and through us.

Thankfulness is not only a natural response; it is an affirmation of faith. We ask and we receive; what better sign of faith can we give than our gratitude for the answer?

8. USE THE FAITH OF OTHERS.

This can be a guide and a spur to your own, but never forget that faith is entirely personal between you and God.

9. SEEK TO PLEASE THE LORD.

Do this by trying to put your faith in action every day in some positive act. Seek to let God's power work through you for good, for the fulfillment of His divine plan. Help His children. Do good to others, both friends and enemies. Be the

servant of the Lord in all things. We all wish to please those we love; if we love God we will naturally want to find ways of pleasing Him.

10. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.

This does not mean you must spend all your time in church, or go your daily rounds repeating prayers and phrases. It means that our whole life and our every action should, in effect, be a prayer, an act of faith. Every step we take, every move in business or our personal lives, every new adventure, every attempt to solve our problems, to meet our bills, to send our children to school—everything we do in our lives becomes a part of our faith, a wordless prayer, an expression of belief. And if we believe aright, there is an affirmation of trust and triumph in the answer of the Lord. Thus is our faith set free.

Daring to believe—daring to release your faith—produces immediate and tremendous results. Such results can be very surprising to you, in their swiftness and power. Miracles will take place for you—God's intervention in the affairs of your life—because faith draws unto us the hand of God, touching our lives with an immediacy and power we have never known before and unlike anything we could ever have imagined.

Following these ten road signs to faith will not only help you to achieve your goals in life, it will bring you close to God's goal for your life—a vibrant rebirth, revitalization and rededication which is the greatest miracle of all.

"DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ABUNDANT LIFE PRAYER GROUP?"

THIS QUESTION is asked many times a day by a woman who lives in Berkley, Michigan. Through it she has found a unique ministry in helping people through the prayers of the Prayer Group.

At the beginning of her day she prays, "Lord, send me to someone who needs You." And then, as she comes into contact with human need, she asks the question and gives the person the telephone number of the Prayer Group. For instance, waiting in line at a lunch counter, she sensed that the woman beside her was in need. The conversation was soon turned around to the Prayer Group which is ready 24 hours a day to pray for people, and the listener said, "Give me their telephone number, I want to call them often."

The same question was put to a woman whose husband lay hemorrhaging to death. They called the Prayer Group to pray while they laid their hands on the dying man in the name of the Lord. In one week the man was recovered and the doctor's X rays proved it.

A young man with acute depression had left his wife weeping that morning. He was so unhappy he had made an appointment with a psychiatrist. "Do you know about the Abundant Life Prayer Group?" the woman from Berkley asked his wife. A call was put through to Tulsa for prayer. That night the young man came home from work with a complete change of personality. "I can cancel my appointment now," he said.

The Abundant Life Prayer Group is ready to serve all people around the clock. If there is a need of prayer for any cause, call or wire at any hour of the day or night. Consecrated prayer partners will pray for you personally. Call LUther 3-2191, Tulsa, Oklahoma. (Area Code 918).

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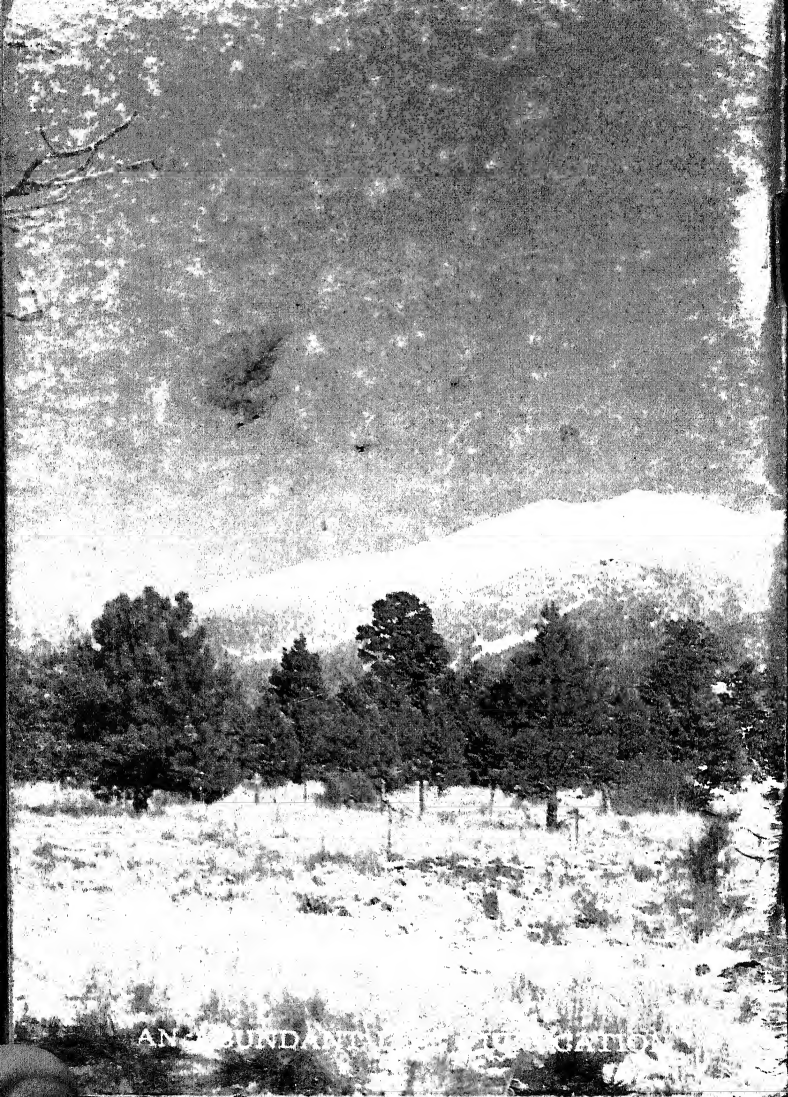
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